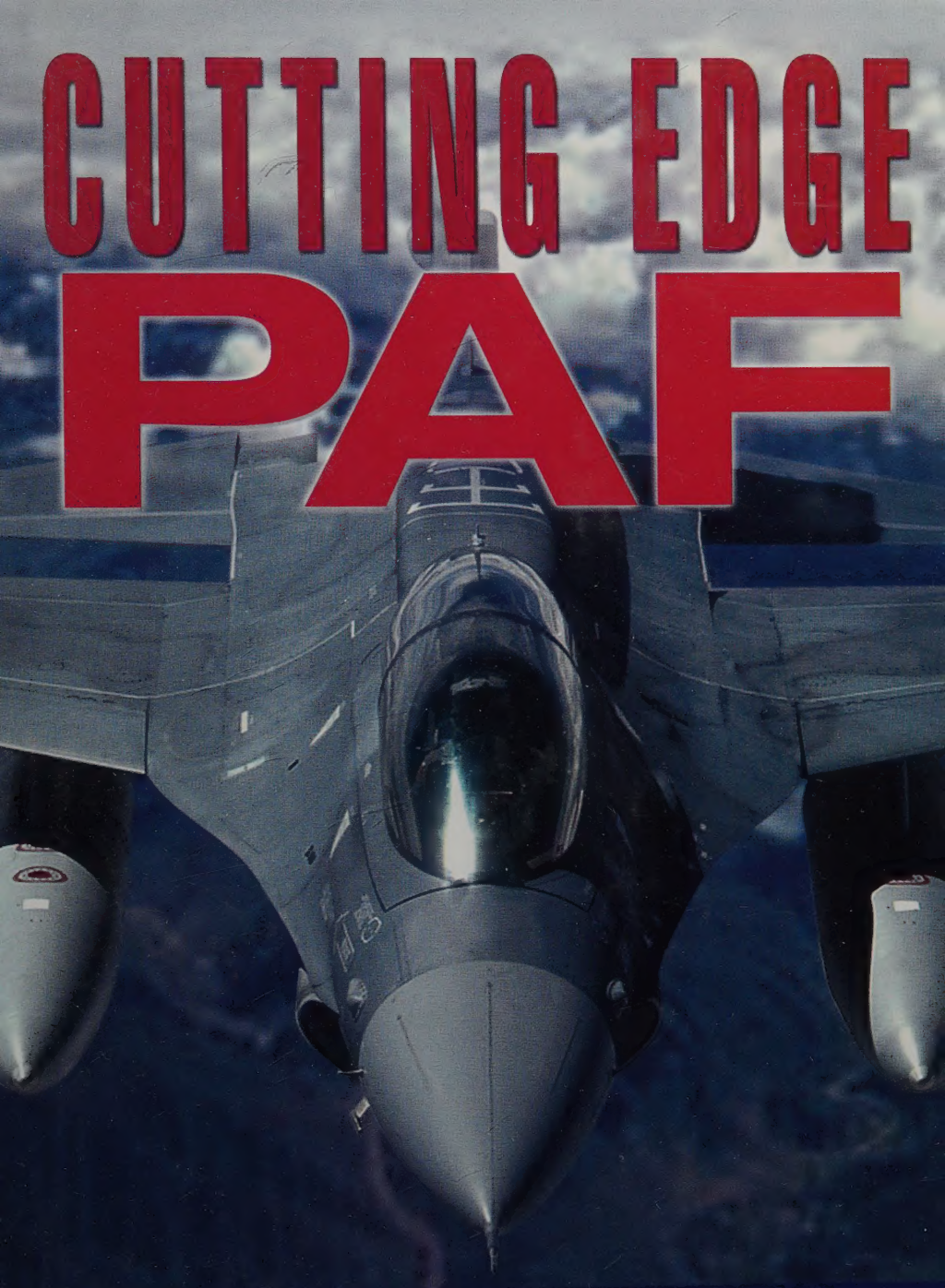
CUTTING EDGE PAF



A Former Air Chief's Reminiscences of
A Developing Air Force

AIR CHIEF MARSHAL M. ANWAR SHAMIM (RETD)

Air Chief Marshal M Anwar Shamim graduated as a pilot from Point Cook, Australia in 1954. After his jet conversion on Vampires in Australia, he was posted to PAF's first jet unit, No 11 Squadron, which he later went on to command in 1963. In 1964 he was given charge of PAF's elite 33 Wing, which he commanded during the 1965 War. He led the famous raid on Amritsar's radar, which earned him a Sitara-i-Jur'at. In 1968, he was sent to Jordan as Air Advisor to King Hussein. On return to Pakistan, he took over as Air Defence Sector Commander – South, in which capacity he controlled air defence operations in the 1971 War. He had the privilege of commanding Sakesar, Korangi Creek and PAF's largest, Masroor, Air Bases. He was appointed Assistant Chief of Air Staff in 1975. In 1978 he was selected to be the Chief of Air Staff, an appointment he held till 1985. He was instrumental in two important developments in the PAF that have helped it remain second to none: Introduction of Regional Commands to decentralise command and control and ensure better liaison with the Army and Navy field formations; secondly, the induction of F-16s which redressed the imbalance against the traditional adversary India over the years.

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Cutting Edge PAF
Reminiscences

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Air Chief Marshal M Anwar Shamim (Retd)

VANGUARD BOOKS
Lahore / Karachi / Islamabad

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Dedication

This book is dedicated to my wife Tahira Shamim for her companionship of fifty years and unceasing support, patience and help and to my children and grand children.

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Preface

It is said that when writing reminiscences, the truth is the first casualty. But I am lucky in this regard that eminent and not so eminent writers were standing beside me all along during my tenure as Air Chief to write the truth – lest I took any wrong step!

Frankly, I did not wish to write my recollections because a lot has been written in the history books brought out by the Pakistan Air Force at regular intervals. However my wife Tahira Shamim and children, especially my daughter Saqeba kept on insisting to write down about myself for the grand children. In the end, Saqeba told me to either write or she would herself write my biography. That of course set the ball rolling in the spring of 2008 when Nature is at its best. The story was all stored in my mind and, notes that I had written all along, came in handy. I uttered '*Bissmilla*' and started typing on my computer. By early November 2008 the first draft was ready for a review.

I gave it to Air Commodore M Tariq Qureshi PAF (Retired), for a review. He returned it in January 2009. I am very thankful to him. Air Commodore M Tariq Qureshi (Retired) is Principal Shaheen School System and at the same time a PhD student at National University of Modern Languages, Islamabad at the 'young' age of sixty, who was able to review the manuscript despite his over crowded schedule. Tariq Qureshi was the Assistant Chief of Air Staff (Education) and my Secretary when

I was the Air Chief. He is also the author of "History of the Pakistan Air Force 1947-1982."

The book was thereafter handed over to Air Commodore M Kaiser Tufail (Retired), author of a very well received book 'Great Air Battles of Pakistan Air Force' first published in 2005 by Ferozesons (Pvt) Ltd and again reprinted in a revised edition in 2006. He is also author of numerous articles on air wars, flying and general defence issues, as well as articles on adventure, exploration and travel. I thank him for providing annexes of war records for my book which he had prepared with thorough care and research.

The title of the book reflects my conviction that with every step one advances in service, new challenges are thrown up for which appropriate responses have to be formulated. Ultimate challenges are faced when one is blessed with the command of a service like the Pakistan Air Force. Then, sky is the limit in what can be done to make it a cutting edge force, second to none.

Several other people have helped me with this project and each one deserves my gratitude.

I am grateful to the Directorate of Information Technology for ensuring that my computer remained in good working condition by sending Flight Lieutenant Ali and Flight Lieutenant Farhad and Mr Fahd to my residence at odd hours.

I am very grateful to Air Commodore Humayun Wiqar, Group Captain Tariq Mahmood and Wing Commander Amir of Directorate of Media Affairs for providing photographs for the book and other help when ever required by me. Acknowledgement is also due to Cpl Tech Khurram for having spent many hours sifting through several thousand photographs made available by the Directorate for selection.

I am also indebted to Operations Directorate and Shaheen Foundation for providing me with all the information required for the book.

My special thanks to Shan Ali Ghalib for composing a ballad for 'Tail Choppers' (No 14 Squadron).

My thanks are due to PAF's well-known artist, Group Captain S M A Hussaini (Retd), whose paintings adorn the book.

Finally, my thanks to Kamran Sani, a budding graphic artist of Hawk Advertising who designed the front and back cover of the book.

M Anwar Shamim

Introduction

My love of being in the aircraft started in 1936, in a remote part of Pakistan, a place known as Usterzai about 12 miles from Kohat along Kohat – Hungu –Thal railway line. There I saw a biplane and wished to be in that aircraft. Thirteen years later, my wish was fulfilled when I was selected for flying in the University Air Squadron Lahore. There, in fact, I had a tryst with destiny. During that period I applied to join the Pakistan Air Force and was fortunate to be selected for the 10th General Duties Pilot's (GDP) Course. I reported to PAF College Risalpur in July 1950. After a few months training at Risalpur I was selected for training in the Royal Australian Air Force from 1951 to 1954. This was followed by four months of Jet Conversion Course at Williamtown Air Base, located about 100 miles from Sydney.

The big break in my career was when I was selected for command of the famous 11 Jet Fighter Squadron; thereafter I commanded 33 Fighter Wing during 1965 war. I also commanded two air defense bases and was Southern Air Defence Commander during 1971 War. I had the good fortune to be selected as Air Adviser to His Majesty King Hussein Bin Talal. In Jordan I got a golden opportunity to plan and develop a most modern air force. I commanded PAF Base Masroor, a dream of a fighter pilot, from 1972 to 1975. In 1975 I was posted as Assistant Chief of Air Staff (Operations) at Air Headquarters

and on 22nd July 1978 I was selected to command PAF, the best air force in the world.

When the President appointed me to command the PAF he told me that I would have no involvement in the Martial Law and I was to make Pakistan Air Force second to none; he added that he would fully support me in my endeavour. That was like sweet music to my ears. However Martial Law Headquarters asked for some officers for duties but instead of deputing serving officers, I offered retired officers for those assignments.

From my predecessor I was handed over the Air Force which had achieved basic operational posture in all respects. Man power deficiencies were made up and infrastructure was put in place. It was now up to me to take them to a high level of operational efficiency. I did that by putting the entire Air Force through seven 'Jet Stream' exercises in seven years. In these exercises all departments of PAF were tested. Also, the sister services took active part to enhance inter-services cooperation.

I also realised that whereas the two sister services operated on decentralized concept i.e., Army on Corps level and Navy on Fleet level, the PAF was operating through Centralized Command. This incongruity created lack of appropriate planning, coordination and understanding at the fighting level. I therefore proposed to the government to create three Tactical Commands i.e., Northern Command, Central Command and Southern Command to work along side with Corps Commanders and Fleet Commander. By creating three Tactical Commands the PAF decentralized Tactical Operations but Strategic Operations remained with the Command Headquarters.

I was also mindful of the fact that the PAF did not have the resources to carry out welfare actives in any meaningful way. Though Shaheen Foundation was established but it had yet to takeoff the ground. In a few years it was turned into a thriving

organization with the guidance by the members of the Air Board to the retired officers running the organization. Thereafter, welfare to the needy posed no problem. At the same time Pakistan Air Force Women's Association (PAFWA) was also reorganized on scientific lines by Mrs. Tahira Shamim and this also took off and attained a very high standard to provide meaningful welfare to families.

We had old aircraft in our inventory and the threat on our western border was looming large posed by the modern aircraft of the Russian Air Force. The Air Board discussed induction of latest high performance aircraft to match the Russian threat. The Air Board agreed with the recommendation of Operations Branch to acquire multi-role F-16 from the United States of America. After a lot of struggle we were able to purchase 40 aircraft. The story of this venture is faithfully recorded in main narrative of the book. In the mean time we upgraded our Air Defence infrastructure and turned it into one of the best in the world.

With Grace of Allah and His blessings I, together with my officers and men, made the PAF one of the best in the world. On 5th March 1985 I handed over the command to my successor Air Chief Marshal Jamal A Khan.

I have the full satisfaction of having tried my best and done my duty with utmost dedication and sincerity. *In final analysis, dear readers, the Commanders / Leaders are to be judged by not what they achieve but what they fail to achieve.*

1
I Shall Always Remember

An Innocent Wish

It was the year 1936. I was standing in the courtyard of the second floor of our house on a Sunday evening at Usterzai Payan. The place is located in Bangash valley, a semi-settled tribal territory, about 12 miles from Kohat along narrow gauge railway line from Kohat to Hangu and Thal. A biplane following the railway line passed along our house going towards Thal. I waved my hand to the pilot, and to my utter delight, he waved back. He was dressed in a leather helmet with big goggles but, the thing that fascinated me the most, was the vivid red scarf he was wearing which fluttered behind his head as he flew off into the distance. At that point in time, I knew my greatest desire was to be in the aircraft. The mythical bird may have passed overhead and noted my innocent wish for recording in the book of destiny!

My Family

In 1931, my father Muhammad Rafiq was undergoing training as Assistant Sub Inspector in Punjab Police. During

training he tendered his resignation; boarded the train and reached Haripur Hazara in NWFP where my mother was residing with her two sons. Since my mother was not keeping good heath, my grand parents had joined us to help the family. In late 1933 my mother died. She was just 28 years old. As this was not enough of tragedy, my elder brother who was nine years of age also joined my mother after a year. The double tragedy was a devastating experience for my father. My grand parents, who were with us, took charge of the family and helped us out of the trauma. My father often visited his friends in police department; some times I also accompanied him. After seeing the life style of his friends and their children I felt a tinge of envy. Once I asked him the reason he did not continue to serve in the police department. He replied, "I did not like to have that kind of life; I liked to be a teacher." I never asked him that question again. His wish to be in the teaching profession was granted and he rose to be the honourable Principal of three high schools in Hazara District prior to his retirement.

Early Life

At Haripur, my father met the Director of Education, a family friend, who offered him a teaching job. Being a trained teacher my father liked the idea of serving in the department of education and accepted the offer. He was posted at a school in Haripur Hazara. In 1936, he was posted to Usterzai Payan in Kohat District. My father was reluctant to go on posting because he did not wish to expose the family to a different environment so soon after the trauma of two deaths in the family. However, he was persuaded to go on posting and if the family had difficulty in adjusting at Usterzai, he would be posted back to Hazara. We packed our baggage, boarded the train for Kohat and

reached there in the morning. We stayed three hours in the waiting room at Kohat railway station. In the morning we boarded the train to reach Usterzai Payan. It was narrow gauge train on a branch line from Kohat to Thal. Usterzai Payan is situated about 12 miles from Kohat. After about an hour's scenic journey we reached Usterzai railway station. The station was situated in the middle of two villages, Usterzai Payan and Usterzai Bala. When we alighted the train, to our surprise there was a welcome party composed of teachers and senior students to greet us. The students took charge of our baggage and we decided to walk down to the village along with the party rather than take a ride in a tonga (horse drawn carriage). After about thirty minutes walk, we reached the house rented for us. To our surprise, the house had all that we needed including the necessary food items for at least a month. There was lunch for about ten people; thereafter, they went on providing us with breakfasts, lunches and dinners for about ten days until my father eventfully met the person who was in charge of coordinating all this arrangement. He had to request him to discontinue this activity, as our kitchen was fully functional from day one due to courtesy of the nameless local residents. This was the first taste of legendary Pakhtun hospitality.

Usterzai is situated on a plateau about one thousand feet high. Our house was located on the slope overlooking the valley. The main house was below the front street level with a courtyard open to sky. It had one entrance with a strong door. In addition, it had a large room on first floor with a roof-top courtyard. In fact, the main house was like a present day basement. From a security point of view it was ideal. The railway line ran close to our house, and beyond that were farmlands and gardens along the banks of seasonal Toi River. However, it had enough running fresh water throughout the year for the consumption of local

population, irrigation of farmlands and gardens. About two miles away was a hill about three thousand feet high. The view from our house across the valley was beautiful. The people were very civilized and there was tremendous respect for each other. All disputes were settled by negotiations with the help of a third party and the Jirga composed of elders of the village handled serious cases. There was no permanent presence of police in the village. However, two constables were based at Usterzai Bala who would routinely pay a visit every couple of weeks. The whole valley was under the jurisdiction of police station at Hangu. The law and order was of a very high standard, and justice was fair and quick. Every one in the village or visitors carried either rifle or revolver. It was a part of dress code, or legacy of the times when the area was totally lawless. The village 'hujra' a sort of rest house and meeting place was located at the entrance to the village. It was open twenty-four hours a day. It had enough beds for meetings and resting. It had couple of 'chillums' ('hookah' or hubble-bubble) and a big pouch of tobacco. However, any one who smoked carried his own pouch of tobacco and if some one forgot to carry that day, he could use from the kitty and according to custom, add to the kitty on his next visit. The visitors were welcome to use the facility and could stay the night if required; provision of meals was ensured for the visitors.

The local population was one hundred percent Shiite. The only exception was a Hindu merchant, a Hindu teacher, and one or two Sunni teachers. Later a Sikh, who had served as medical assistant in hospital in Hangu, came to the village to set up a small scale pharmacy, and started medical practice. Since people were fond of eating, rather overeating, Sardarji made full use of red, blue and yellow colour mixture carbonate kept in big jars, and grounded aspirin wrapped in paper marked as special

powder. These two medicines took care of almost ninety percent of the sick cases. The ailments being standard, recovery with the help of above-mentioned medicines was quick. Sardarji made good money as well as became a respected member of the local community and the surrounding villages.

The village merchant was doing a roaring business. Ninety percent of his business was conducted by barter. The winner of course was the merchant making profit at both ends. Since he had no competitor, he became very rich. He was also a money lender. People needed money at all times: for medical reasons, supporting children in schools and colleges and for buying a wife – an established custom in the valley. The merchant would lend money freely, of course with house, ornaments or land as security. Over a period of time, majority of people were in perpetual debt to the merchant. No doubt partition of India in 1947 would have been a great boon to the people, relieving them of burden of accumulated debts.

The full blast of legendary Pakhtun hospitality is experienced once you start living with them, and if you speak Pashto, then you are considered one of them. I narrated the kind of welcome we experienced on our arrival and it would be disservice to the people of Usterzai if I do not write about other aspects of our life that they made pleasant for us. We will forever be grateful to them for the deep love and respect shown to us during our stay in their village. After about a few months stay my father was often invited to 'jirga' meetings. It was a great honour bestowed on an outsider. Since he had sound knowledge of Islam, Islamic History and local traditions, I am sure he must have made some contribution. He was also invited to go along with party of elders when they went to ask for the hand of some ones daughter or sister for marriage of sons or brothers. Here I must point out that all the negotiations for

establishing a union were always completed by the ladies by quiet diplomacy and the party of elders only gave the formal stamp of approval for the union of two families. Once the marriage was solemnized the bride became part of the husband's family. She had an honoured place in the family. Divorces were unheard of in the area. The family always sided with the daughter-in-law in case of dispute between husband and wife. The husband of course had a choice to marry a second wife but in the family the first wife always retained the number one position. If the dispute arose between family of husband or wife, the wife always sided with the husband's family. That was expected and that was the norm. Young and old ladies often called on my grand mother. The conversation was done in Hindko, Pashto and the universal language - hand gestures. My grand mother belonged to Mirza clan, which had migrated from Central Asia and therefore felt deep affinity to the people of Usterzai. One of the regular visitors was the wife of the Hindu merchant. Since she was not allowed to go to any one's house, our coming to Usterzai was great boon for her. She would bring her son Paloo, my class mate, with her. He was also delighted to come to our house as same restrictions applied to him too. For his sake I would invite some mutual friends. I used to visit his house quite often. His mother would cook tasty 'pakoras' for us. One thing I could not comprehend was that whereas Paloo had no restrictions to go to any place in our house, I was not allowed to enter their kitchen and some rooms. It only became clear when I grew up that for Hindus the kitchen becomes unclean if a Muslim or a low caste Hindu enters their kitchen. That was one of the reasons for gulf between Hindus and Muslims. A friend of my father allotted a piece of land in my name. Any crop grown on the land was mine. During summer I would bring ears of corn and at the end

of the season many sacks were delivered to our house. These were enough to last till the next season. In late spring similar sacks of wheat were also sent to our house. A second friend of my father later allotted a seasonal fruit tree exclusively for me. I would go to the garden and pick the fruit whenever I liked. This kind of respect, love and affection is rare any where except in the tribal areas. Before I close the chapter of our stay at Usterzai, I would write about an incident of great tribal importance. When I was in class two we had a pleasant surprise. The Senior Khan, Captain (retired), got his daughter admitted in our class. I had met her many times in her house where I would go often to play. She settled down nicely. However the village folks were up in arms. That created a crisis in the village. The dejected girl was promptly taken off from the school. I guess the Khan was 200 years or perhaps more, ahead of time for the area or the society he lived in. In December 1940 my father was posted out to Nawan Shehr situated two miles from Abbottabad. That triggered a round of unending farewell dinners. In January 1940 we were seen off by about two hundred men and old ladies as well as my class fellows at the railway station. With a heavy heart, I bade farewell to my class mates. We were all sad. My sadness lasted till I made new friends at Nawan Shehr. However the memories of time spent at Usterzai amongst wonderful people has remained deeply embedded in my mind. I felt obliged to write in some details regarding the kind of society we have in certain parts of our country, where crime was minimal, there was respect for each other, traditions were honoured, women were respected, disputes were settled amicably, where guests were looked after and many more such healthy traditions. I have always wondered what effects or changes multinationals, television and world wide communications will bring about on

the society that lives or has lived according to their traditions. The answer will be quite enlightening.

I passed my matriculation from Government High School, Haripur Hazara in 1946. I stayed in the boarding school for two wonderful years. The school paid a lot of emphasis on games. I was part of the school teams in football, hockey and volleyball. We played against two high schools run by Sikh and Hindu communities. I joined Government College, Campbellpur in Attock district in September 1946. The college had a galaxy of professors. Majority of those were Hindus, one or two Sikhs and a couple of Muslims. The college had a good reputation and students from all over Punjab and North West Frontier Province keenly sought admission there. First six months or so were good but then due to uncertainty of future of India, Hindu and Sikh professors started leaving for places in present day India. Muslim professors were posted in but educational activity slowed down. Demonstrations started against Punjab government headed by Mr Tiwana of Unionist Party. In Campbellpur the demonstrations were spear headed by students of our college. After World War Two the British concluded that they could no longer hold India in bondage. Therefore, they unfolded a programme of handing over India to Indians. Various proposals were discussed. In addition to other major issues, Quaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah, heading Muslim League Party had the foresight to insist on an agreement to include in the constitution, a quota system in all government departments for Muslims according to their population. This was required to safeguard their rights as minority. He had the vision to appreciate that Muslims of India were less educated, less wealthy, less business-minded, less politically savvy and, except for a few provinces in India where they had majority, they were scattered all over India and outnumbered by the majority Hindu population. The

Muslims were bound to face tyranny of majority and remain poor and backward. A British historian W W Hunter noted in 1872 "thirty million Muhammadan subjects of the Queen had been ruined as a race by the new rulers by shutting even the educated and trained out of choice government position. Instead, all the advantages of life were passed on to the Hindus of India, while the Muslims were left to decay." The All India Congress Party headed by Mr. Jawaharlal Nehru and Vallabhai Patel representing Hindus and other minorities, remained adamant against any such protection in the constitution. With the uncompromising positions on major issues on both sides, the die was cast in favour of partition. Therefore 14th August 1947 was the day Pakistan found a place on the map of the world as a new country. I do not wish to go into details of life in the sub-continent prior to or after partition but I want to write about an eye witness account of the horrible scene I saw at the railway station at Campbellpur.

At the end of summer vacation in August 1947 I arrived at the railway station at Campbellpur in the evening. I was unable to proceed to the boarding house because curfew had been imposed. Therefore, I had to spend the night at the railway station. Early in the morning a train arrived from India. Every one at the station rushed towards the train. I also ran to see the reason for that commotion. What I saw was impossible to describe. There were mutilated bodies and blood all over in the bogies and no survivors. It was a heart wrenching experience for me. For many days I could not forget the gory scenes. I could not imagine how human beings, on both sides of divide, could become so wild and inhuman.

I finished my intermediate in 1948. I decided to join Dyal Singh College, Lahore. This college was chosen because Abed Ali Abed, the Principal, was a family friend. The college life was

very pleasant and smooth. I made plenty of friends while staying in the hostel.

Joining University Air Squadron

During early November 1949 I read a programme on college notice board of visit by Pakistan Air Force team regarding formation of University Air Squadrons at Lahore, Drigh Road, Chaklala, Peshawar and Dhaka air stations. After reading the notice I decided to attend the lecture. I also persuaded a couple of class fellows to join me. Two smartly dressed officers gave us a talk. The talk was about the decision by the PAF to impart flying training to selected college students. They stressed the point that it was free and there was no obligation for the students to join the PAF. The idea was to make young men air minded. This was a brain child of Air Vice Marshal Atcherley, an ace World War Two pilot of the Royal Air Force UK, on deputation to PAF as Commander-in-Chief. At the end of the talk, the leader of the team invited volunteers to join University Air Squadron to learn flying. This was a God-given opportunity for me and I was the first to opt for joining the University Air Squadron. I was followed by a few other students. After about a week we were called for an interview with Wing Commander B K Dass, Station Commander, PAF Station Lahore followed by a medical check up. To my utter delight I along with Akhtar and Altaf Yawar were selected. Akhtar joined PIA after training but died in the unfortunate air crash on the inaugural flight to Cairo. Altaf Yawar who took the honoured profession of journalism and became a successful and respected member of the journalists' community. Regrettably he died in the prime of his life.

After the interview we were told that we would be informed officially by Air Headquarters. The waiting period was rather

difficult to endure. Every day was like a week. At last I received a letter of my selection and was directed to report to PAF Station Lahore on 31st December 1949 for inauguration ceremony of No 2 University Air Squadron.

I reached the station half an hour before time. I met students from other colleges who had made the grade. The ceremony was in the afternoon in the open air. There was seating arrangement on tables for four people. There was one student and three officers on each table. I had the good fortune to have Squadron Leader Steve Joseph (later became Air Vice Marshal and served as Deputy Chief of Air Staff), Flight Lieutenant Banakh, an ex-Polish Officer who joined PAF on five years contract as flying instructor, and Flying Officer Ijaz Rafiqui elder brother of late Sarfaraz Rafiqui who was martyred on 6th September 1965. As soon as every one was seated, the Commander-in-Chief arrived. He gave a speech to welcome the students and explained the raison d'etre of the scheme of organizing University Air Squadrons. After the speech sumptuous tea was served followed by air display. We were thrilled by an aerobatics display by Squadron Leader Rahim Khan (later became Air Marshal and Commander-in-Chief PAF) in Fury aircraft and Flight Lieutenant Zafar Mahmood (retired as Air Commodore), in Tiger Moth aircraft. While we were having tea, Squadron Leader Joseph went over to an adjacent table for a chit chat. Flying Officer Rafiqui asked me if I had heard of Squadron Leader Joseph. I replied that I did not know any thing about him. He leaned over and whispered that he is 'King' of Harvard. I started wondering where this country Harvard was and what the King was doing here as a junior officer in the PAF. When he saw consternation on my face he said Harvard was an aircraft; he had full mastery over it and that was why he was known as King of Harvard. He added that Joseph was known to have flown under

the Attock Bridge, under high tension wires and more yarns like that. I assessed that he must be a big gun in the PAF. We were asked to report on 2nd January 1950 at 0800 hours at PAF Station Lahore. Except for a few students all reported on time. All of us were given about 20 minutes of joy ride in Tiger Moth. What a thrilling experience it was. I was totally sold on a career in flying. Flying training was to be conducted in the morning and in the afternoon six days a week. The instructor asked for volunteers for the morning flights. I promptly raised my hand together with a few others who had been selected. The following day we reported on time. We were given a lecture on Tiger Moth and made to sit in the cockpit to familiarize our selves with instruments and levers. We were also given overalls and leather helmets with goggles. At the end of the session the chief flying instructor Flight Lieutenant Banakh told us that the next day flying training would start and we could see our names and timings on the notice board. We rushed to see the notice board. To my delight I was No 1 on the list. On 3rd January 1950 Flight Lieutenant Banakh took me to a Tiger Moth aircraft, taught me how to perform external pre-flight checks by going round the aircraft and ensuring that there was no dent or damage and, elevators and rudders were free of any hindrance. Thereafter, the aircraft was started by the instructor and off we went up in the air. What a thrill it was. The reader can only appreciate my feelings if he puts him self in the shoes of a boy raised in a remote part of the country, who had never been close to an aircraft in his life. On 21st Jan 1950, after the flight, I was told by the instructor to remain seated in the cockpit while he got out and told me to go solo and land back in 20 minutes. I was instructed to remain in the vicinity of the airfield. He said good luck and nonchalantly walked away. I felt a little nervous but when I started heading for the take off point the nervousness

vanished. I took out the red scarf from my pocket and wrapped it around my neck rekindling the memory of the pilot I saw with red scarf back in 1936. I opened the throttle and away I climbed up to 4,000 feet. After about 18 minutes I joined the circuit for landing. I landed and taxied back to parking area. To my surprise a photographer approached my aircraft and took a few photos. Next day my picture was published in newspapers. I had the good fortune to be the first student from the University Squadrons to go solo. I received congratulations from all over Pakistan. Going solo was the first step in learning flying. After that it became serious business to learn the art of flying. In four months I had 30 hours of flying to my credit. While this training was going on I saw an advertisement in the news paper inviting young men to join the Pakistan Air Force. Without a second thought I filled the form and dropped it in post box. Within a month I received a letter from Air Headquarters to report to Inter Services Selection Board (ISSB) at Lahore. I reached ISSB on the due date. There were twenty-nine other candidates. ISSB was all business. They did not waste any time and put us through the testing sequence. After five days I was selected, along with two more students. Next hurdle was the medical test which we passed without a hitch. We were told that in due course we would receive official confirmation from AHQ and instructions to reach PAF College Risalpur on date mentioned in the letter. Next day I told my Instructor regarding my selection for the PAF. He was extremely pleased. He took me for lunch in the Officers' Mess and bid me farewell. Summer vacation had started and I took the train for my home town Haripur Hazara in NWFP. I reached home next day but I did not inform my father regarding flying training and selection through ISSB for joining the PAF. I wanted to inform my parents after receiving the official letter. In June the letter arrived. It was received by my

father who gave it me. I was to report to PAF Risalpur on 29th July 1950. I handed over the letter to my father who after reading congratulated me and wished me best of luck in my career in the PAF. He added, "Son what ever you do in life, you should do in moderation."

2
Beginnings in Pakistan Air Force

On 29th July 1950 I reached PAF College Risalpur as member of 10th GD (P) Course. When all thirty cadets reported at the college we were taken to the barber shop. All fancy hair styles were replaced with crew cut. Every one looked funny at first but after a few days it did not look bad at all. Thereafter, a visit to the barber shop was mandatory every week. At night we were put through ragging for about four hours. It was the toughest regimen that we had to endure. Every command of seniors was to be obeyed. The idea was to mesh us into a group and make us to obey every command of a senior cadet. From the outset we were told not to speak any language but English even though the question may be in Urdu or any other language. Any one who violated that order was punished with a few days of extra drill. Next day the training started like a clock work. The schedule started with physical training in the morning. After breakfast regular studies lasted till 1:30 pm. The lunch was served at 2 pm and out door games were played in the after noon. After dinner we were given one hour of relaxation period to play indoor games, or read news papers and magazines in ante-room; the schedule ended with studies in our

rooms and lights off at 10 pm. Sundays were free but new entry cadets were not allowed to go out of college premises for first three months. After that period of adjustment we were allowed to go any where on weekends but we had to be in bed by 10 pm on Sunday. Most of us started enjoying that life. However there were some cadets who grumbled a bit, but they also started liking the life after three months of incubation period. I recall only one cadet from Lahore who decided to opt out of the college. He belonged to an affluent business family. The rigours of life in the armed forces were beyond his endurance level.

A Lucky Break

When we had completed about four months in the college, Air Headquarters informed that two cadets from our batch were to be selected to go to Royal Australian Air Force College Point Cook for four years training. The college was to select five cadets with good background in Mathematics, Physics and English. Squadron Leader Eric Hall, the Director of Training, would assess the cadets for their aptitude in flying. He was to fly five sorties with each cadet. With my flying background with University Air Squadron I was declared fit after one sortie. The remaining four cadets were given five sorties each. Of those four Wiqar Alvi was chosen. We were to leave PAF College Risalpur to reach PAF Drigh Road Karachi to board BOAC flight on 30th December 1950. We had about a month to get ourselves equipped with clothes and visit our homes to say goodbye to friends and family. I was given two days to spend with my family. Every one was delighted on my selection for training in Australia. When it was time to leave I had to go out to meet my grand father because he had not returned from his morning routine. He would go out at 4 am to the river, take a bath, and offer his prayers; and return in his own time. Since he was old he would take

rest along the way. I was familiar with his routine because I had accompanied him a few times during my summer vacations. I saw him resting on an embankment over a small stream running under the road. I told him that I was leaving for Risalpur on my way to Australia. He had tears in his eyes. That was the first time I ever saw him in such an emotional state. He asked me the distance between Australia and Haripur Hazara. I replied that it was ten thousand miles. He said, "Never mind the distance you would always be in my mind. I would pray for your long, healthy and fruitful life." When I hugged him he said, "I guess this may be our final goodbye." The full import of his last words I did not comprehend at that time but after six months I received a telegram that he died peacefully and prayed for me prior to his last breath. He was a loving grand father who spent a lot of time with me. I had always loved to be in his company. His departure from this world was inevitable but it caused tremendous sadness and void in my life. May God give him a place in Paradise.

Outbound to Down Under

I returned to Risalpur and on 20th December 1950, Wiqar and I boarded the train for Karachi. On 22nd morning we reached Karachi Railway Station. We were received by a PAF Warrant Officer who took us to Officers' Mess Drigh Road. He informed us that all our travel arrangements were complete. This was my first visit to Karachi but Wiqar Alvi was a Karachi-ite. He knew how to spend time in the city of lights. Karachi in those days was a very clean city. Between Drigh road and Karachi there were hardly any buildings except for Lal Kothi (red bungalow) and a few houses. I had good tour of Karachi, thanks to Alvi. In the evening I would take a ride in an old Chevrolet car, a taxi service run by an enterprising Pathan. On 30th December we boarded a

BOAC Constellation, a four-engine propeller driven aircraft. For both of us this was our first ride in a commercial aircraft. The seat in first class was very comfortable and the attendants were very friendly and courteous. We landed at Dum Dum airfield in Calcutta for refuelling for onward flight to Singapore but our departure was delayed for a few hours due to a technical fault. The upshot was that they took us to the city for a round. We were pleased to see Calcutta. After repairs we took off for Singapore. We reached in the evening and were taken to Raffles Hotel for night stay. This was a famous war time hotel for rest and recreation (R & R) for troops and a watering hole for local elite, businessmen and travellers. We got ready and went to the main hotel building. It appeared that every one was in the bar including crew of our aircraft. We also joined the crowd. It was truly a cosmopolitan crowd composed of Malays, Americans, British, Australians, Chinese, Indonesians, Indians and Pakistanis. All were drinking and chatting: and some narrating war time yarns. One of the crew of our aircraft offered drinks to us. I told him my colleague did not drink alcohol. He asked Alvi if he would prefer a tall glass of club soda with lime juice. Alvi gave an affirmative answer. He winked at the waiter to put a large shot of gin in the drink which the bartender happily obliged. As soon as Alvi took a few sips of the drink he liked it. He said that was the best club soda he had ever had. After finishing the glass he asked for one more. After a few drinks shy Alvi opened up and started narrating his own yarns of student days. Soon Alvi was floating in a different world. Next day he was all smiles at the breakfast table. On 31st December we took off for Djakarta, Indonesia. Since we were flying east the time zone was changing rapidly. At nine the Captain announced that it was the last evening of the year therefore we were going to celebrate the New Year. The air hostesses brought out trolleys full of champagne bottles. Every

one joined in to say goodbye to 1950 and to welcome 1951. The only persons who were not allowed to join in merry making were the co-pilot and the navigator. The Captain was in the forefront of celebration clicking his glass with every one. Some started dancing in the corridor. At midnight every one was in high gear. At one second past midnight the co-pilot announced goodbye to 1950 and wished happy New Year to all of us. All passengers started singing goodbye to last year and welcome to New Year. Soon afterwards every one was fast asleep. Forty minutes prior to landing the co-pilot gave a call for getting ready for landing. The Captain staggered to his seat in the cockpit. This was the most enjoyable, most delightful, most hilarious and I suppose the most dangerous flight that I have ever undertaken in my life. In those days international regulations for flying were not that strictly enforced. It was later that gap of ten hours between 'bottle and throttle' was introduced.

Our next destination was Darwin in Australia. We reached there in the evening. There was not much to see in Darwin. We took off and landed in the afternoon in Sydney. There was a message for us that the air force car was waiting to take us to the railway station. At railway station we were received by the air force personnel. They handed over the tickets and helped us board the train. In about thirty minutes we were on our way to Melbourne our final destination. On the morning on 4th January 1950 we reached Melbourne. The liaison officer was waiting for us to take us to Royal Australian Air Force College, Point Cook.

I was full of confidence when I joined the RAAF College. The confidence was the result of variety of experiences in life. My early life was shaped by tribal customs, six years of living in boarding houses, love of outdoor activities, flying experience as a university student and six months of tough training in the PAF College.

3
Training with Royal Australian Air Force

Point Cook is located on shores of Port Philips Bay, 25 km South West of Melbourne. Throughout the year the climate in Melbourne area is beautiful and bracing just like Kakul, Abbottabad. After the war the Royal Australian Air Force decided to establish a college with a four year course in flying and academics. No 1 Course was started in 1948. First two and a half years of the course were devoted to academic studies and the remaining one and a half years were for flying subjects and flying training. Throughout the course greater emphasis was on academic studies and Officer Like Qualities (OLQs) ie, leadership and personal conduct. A flying training school was already established during World War II, based at Point Cook, to train officers and sergeant pilots. This school produced adequate number of pilots (officers and non-commissioned officers) for the air force. The objective of long course was to train officers who would have high standard of knowledge and desired qualities of an officer and gentleman to hold key positions in the air force.

Cultural Shock

On arrival I was met by a senior cadet and we had a chit chat. He told me to report to him if I needed any thing or had any difficulty. Close by, two cadets from my course were listening to our conversation. One of them told the other he can speak English. After conversation with the senior cadet I waked over to them. After introduction one of them said, "Have you come to-die (today) mite (mate)?" I replied no. I have come today to join the course and not to die. They said we mean to die and spelt it for me. Then I realized that Australians pronounce 'today' as 'to-die and mate as mite'. I asked them what they were discussing while I was talking to the senior cadet. They said they were pleasantly surprised to hear me speak English and that I had no cut marks on my face or wearing some fancy dress. I realized that these young men had no knowledge of Pakistan. They thought Pakistan was located some where in Africa. No 4 course, ie our course, started off with 28 cadets, of which two 24 were Australian while two were from New Zealand and two from Pakistan. We were allotted separate rooms in spotlessly clean barracks. Community bathrooms and toilets were located at the end of the barracks. Soon I realized that these were to be kept in such a condition by the junior most courses and this burden was now ours. The showers however did not have doors. That was a cultural shock. Alvi and I sorted out the problem by taking showers one hour prior to the other cadets. After about three or four days we were taken to a public swimming pool in Melbourne to find out those who did not know swimming and would need lessons. That was very essential part of pilots' training because a pilot may have to bail out over water. It was therefore a must for them to know swimming and survive in water. On way to the swimming pool, I asked a course-mate what we were going to do because we did not have swimming trunks. He replied that you

do not need swimming trunks because there would be no ladies there at that time. Alvi and I looked at each other with apprehension but decided to follow the others to get over the problem all together. We did that, and thereafter we could avail an extra one hour of sleep in the morning. All cadets took showers twice a day. I may add here that Australians are very clean people and live in clean environments especially their houses. Their public toilets were spotlessly clean. I am writing that from my personal experience as observed by me during the early fifties. They have many other excellent qualities that I shall write as I go along with this narrative.

Summer Camp

During middle of January all cadets had to go for summer camp, an annual feature, about fifty miles south of Melbourne, on the beach at Waratah Bay. This was organized by cadets of No 1 Course. The aim was to test leadership qualities, organizing ability and cooperation among the senior course; and of course, to toughen up the cadets of the new entry and mesh them into a single body. I feel as a course, we got to know each other extremely well and we were no longer considered foreign students. That, I thought was a great achievement by the college authorities. During the camp our Squadron Commander, Squadron Leader Handbury asked me if I could cook curry for him. I replied that I could do so. Alvi and I cooked meat and potato curry. Surprisingly it turned out to be very tasty. The Squadron Commander who had been stationed in southern India in World War II had a penchant for spicy food. He told me to add more chillies. I did that and after tasting he again asked me to add some more. Reluctantly and against my better judgment I obliged. He and Cadet Paine from New Zealand devoured the

whole lot. Alvi and I insisted that they should eat curry with bread but they refused to do so. At night about 2 am I heard noises and got out of the tent to see the reason for rumpus in the camp. I was told that Squadron Leader Handbury and Cadet Paine were taken to nearby hospital. They had severe bout of dysentery. They spent four days in hospital. On his return he asked me if I had put poison in the curry. I replied that since he had not harmed me so far I did not need to do so. He laughed and said that he should have paid attention to our advice and eaten the curry with lots of bread.

Back to School

After the camp the college studies started with full earnest. We were administered tests in English, Maths and Physics. Alvi having done his 'O' level in Pakistan, was 2nd both in English and overall amongst top ten students, where as I was in the middle. That test was meant to serve as a baseline to compare progress of the students as the course progressed. Any one falling behind the baseline was told to work harder to show improvement. The subjects taught in first two and a half years were English Expression and English Literature, Math, Physics, Chemistry, Economics, Psychology, Philosophy and History of War. The course was designed to give the cadets adequate all round knowledge and thereafter it was up to individual cadet to add to his knowledge during his career. Afternoons were devoted to games.

Discipline at the College

For first three months however we had to run about four miles outside the base every second day. This was rather tough but at the end of three months we were very fit. We were not

allowed to go out of the College premises for first three months to get used to life in the Air Force. After three months we had exams. The teachers, after distributing exam papers and waiting for a few minutes to answer any queries from cadets would go away to their offices. The exams were based on honour system. There was no case of cheating in the college except one in our course. One cadet was seen cheating by the course mates. The cadets decided not to report his case to the teacher but instead all of us stopped talking to him. After a month he put up his resignation and quit the service. Every one was pleased with the outcome as the course was spared the stigma of cheating in the class. Lunch was served at 12:30 pm. Since there were no bearers to serve the food it was the duty of the junior course to serve the meals to senior classes and then eat their own food in what ever time was left. After attending a few more classes after lunch we had to go for games or cross country run. Then a quick shower and run towards the mess for dinner at 5 pm. After dinner every body gathered in the ante-room to play indoor games, read news papers, chit chat; and glance at the notice board for any information or instructions. Every now and then the Under Officer or a senior cadet would pass on instructions. If some one found money, wallet or a precious item he would hand that over to the Under Officer. In the evening get together the Under Officer would display the item for collection by the owner. If no one claimed the item, that was deposited in the club fund. One day the college was informed that two cadets, under the influence of alcohol, had misbehaved in a cinema in Melbourne. The identity of the cadets was not known. That incident was passed on to the Under Officer by the Commandant to find out who the cadets were who brought disrepute to the college. The Under Officer announced the incident of unbecoming behaviour in a public place by two cadets whose

identity was not known and wanted to know the names. Two cadets promptly got up and admitted their fault of rowdy behaviour. Though owning their fault was much appreciated by the college authorities, the cadets were nevertheless punished appropriately. As a nation the Australians are very honest people. If some one found any item on the streets or any where else, it was handed over to police who then would announce that on radio or TV for owners to collect their goods. I may also add that majority of Australians leave house keys under the mat outside the door. During our stay in Australia illegal entry to other people's houses was never reported. That spoke volumes of the leaders who led the way to the goal of honesty and integrity in the country and people who followed their leaders in adopting those lofty goals.

The following event is worth mentioning here as that involved one of our own countrymen. A Pakistani officer of the Department of Education was under training in the school of teachers' training in Melbourne. One Saturday he went out for shopping in the city. On his return he found out that his wallet was missing. He thought that either he had dropped it some where or left it in the shop he visited last. When he entered the shop the sales man was very glad to see him and gave him his wallet. There and then the officer opened the wallet and counted the money. After finding it correct and reflecting on his discourteous act of counting in front of the sales man, he felt very ashamed and sincerely apologized to him.

Thrill and Adventure

We had spent three months in quarantine in the college. Also, we had finished the first term exams. The College had planned a visit for us to Northern Australia. We were flown to

Darwin, the Capital of Northern Territories, where we were lodged in military barracks. We decided to have a party in Hotel Darwin, the only hotel in the area, to celebrate the freedom from quarantine. All of us gathered in the lawn where every one had come for dinner. We got ourselves two tables and as token of appreciation in advance we tipped two pounds each to three waiters. We had a thundering party. However the waiters somewhat neglected the other customers. To our bad luck the Commander of Northern Area, a Commodore of Australian Navy, was also having a meal there with his family. He did not appreciate less attention being paid by the waiters to him and his family. Next day he reported the matter to our officer in charge. He also told him that two cadets from Pakistan were in the forefront in organizing the party. We were both called by the officer in charge to tell him about the whole affair. We told him the whole truth. He gathered all of us and put a stop to our going out during that tour. No body minded that quarantine because that was the best party we ever had in our life. After our return from the educational trip the studies became harder as the course progressed. The college paid a lot of attention to games and out door activities. The college had good teams in almost all games. Hockey team needed practice to attain a good standard. Addition of Alvi and me strengthened the team. We started playing every week against Melbourne's 'B' team and eventually became number two in the order of merit in two years. Considering that the college was only established three and a half years back, attaining that position was creditable. We also played against teams from Army and Navy colleges. Australians play cricket, basketball and volleyball during summers. During winters they play football (Four Codes: Rugby Union, Rugby League, soccer, Australian Rules) and hockey. All able-bodied persons in Australia either play or go out to watch a game or enjoy a picnic

on Saturdays. As a nation they love outdoor activities. It is worth mentioning here that Australians play to win and make use of any method to do so, including a thundering party the night before the match. So visitors beware! The Australians show a lot of respect, though, grudgingly for the winning team but look down upon the losers. I have witnessed a hockey team from Pakistan, composed of world class players, on a good will tour to Australia lose shamefully when they accepted hospitality the night before the match. One could not blame Australian team for that. The blame rested squarely on the manager and the captain for not imposing time for curfew. On the contrary Hashim Khan, the renowned world's No 1 squash player, thrashed every player in Australia. Every one had lot of praises and respect for him. He of course did not touch the bottle. Australian managers impose strict control over their teams during matches. I recall when Lew Hoad the world's No 1 tennis player got married and his wife accompanied him to London where he was to take part in Wimbledon Tennis Tournament. His manager Jack Cramer allowed Lew Hoad two hours in the evening to be with his wife. He was to be in bed alone by 9 pm till the end of the tournament. Lew Hoad, to his credit strictly followed those instructions and won.

The college organized many educational trips; and events involving outdoor activities to help pilots to survive and if possible to get to a place where they could get help. I will write about some of the interesting ones further on. I have already mentioned regarding swimming lessons for non-swimmers. After completing four months of a high-pressure course we were scheduled for skiing in the snowy mountains; prior to that we had to manufacture our skis under supervision in the hobbies hut. This activity took about a month to complete. We were taken to a school where skiing was taught by an Austrian instructor. He did

not waste any time to put us on the slope. Some tumbles and some falls but we made it. I suppose the first trip down was the hardest but very satisfying when looking up to point from where we were forced to go down. The more faint hearted were literally pushed to go. There were a few minor injuries but I suffered a twisted ankle. However with three days of treatment of dipping the foot alternately in cold and hot water I was back on line. It was fun learning skiing from the professional ski instructor.

While I am covering the subject of survival training I am fast forwarding to 2nd and 3rd years to cover very important outdoor activities required for survival. We were required to cover a hundred miles in canoes in seven days down the Goulburn River, full of fallen trees, huge rocks and treacherous rapids. We had to manufacture canoes in the hobbies club. These were made of light wooden frame and cloth; and painted to make them strong and water proof. Two cadets were allotted per canoe; one to steer and one to paddle. Bernie Johnson and I decided to be partners in one canoe. We were to carry seven days' tinned ration, bread and water. I assessed that the canoes were not stable enough for rowing down the treacherous river and we were bound to topple over, some time during the journey. We therefore bought plastic sheets from town and wrapped our bedding and food items in them. Lo and behold, the very first day half of the canoes got toppled. We were lucky our bedding and clothes remained dry. Our food items were also saved. The others whose canoes got toppled lost their bread and ended up with soaking wet beddings. They had to sleep around the camp fire and live on tinned food for the remaining part of the journey. During one evening we ended up on the left side of the river, whereas all others were on the right side. In the morning when we were getting ready for breakfast, an old lady walked towards us and brought us hot scones and butter. Those were the best and most delicious scones that we ever had. We thanked the old lady from the

bottom of our heart. When we told the other cadets about the hot scones they were very envious because they did not have any kind of bread for four days. During the course of the journey every one experienced a few dips in the river. After seven days we reached our destination. The whole exercise was very tough but very enjoyable. It also gave us tremendous confidence for survival. In the 3rd year we were scheduled to walk back a hundred miles with two bars of chocolates, a box of matches, a knife, and first aid kit and map of the area. A party of two cadets was to be dropped at different places. This exercise was broadcast on the radio to warn the far flung residents not to entertain or help the cadets in any way except in an emergency. Commandos were also sent in the area and the cadets had to dodge them to avoid penalty. The total time allotted for that exercise was seven days. I was unable to go on that exercise because of illness. The course mates narrated some harrowing tales of being chased by dogs, hiding under the bushes and going hungry for long periods. Some had to catch chickens from farms and, leave a redeemable chit. Most of them were caught but never-the-less had to complete the exercise. Regretfully I missed the opportunity to take part in the grand finale of the out door exercises.

Showing the Flag

The Jubilee celebrations in Canberra, the Capital of Australia, were initiated in 1951 by the Commonwealth Government to celebrate 50 years of the Federation. For Guard of Honour, cadets from three services were chosen. The highlight of the event was when the arrival of the High Commissioner of Pakistan, Mr Yousaf Haroon and Mrs Haroon was announced; all spectators stood up to clap. No other diplomat received that kind of welcome. His Excellency and Mrs Haroon were a handsome, dignified and very social couple and very well known not only in

Sydney but all over Australia. Our High Commissioner correctly appreciated the psyche of the Australian people for their love for games and horse racing. He, therefore, brought his own horses from Pakistan to take part in major races in big cities. Where ever the horses took part, Pakistan flag was seen along with the Australian flag on top of the club buildings. He also organized local cricket matches once a month where all celebrities, including top models in Sydney, were invited. Lunch was always 'biryani' (rice with flavourings) and beer. Every one loved the event. An endearing event needs worth mentioning here was when the High Commissioner had an operation in the best hospital in Sydney. After his recovery he gave a thundering party to all the doctors and staff of the hospital in the best hotel. That was the talk of the town and remembered for a long time.

During my official visit to Australia in 1983, when I was staying in a hotel in Canberra an old lady walked up to me and asked if I was from Pakistan. I replied in the affirmative. She asked me if I knew Mr Yousaf Haroon. I told her that I did. She asked me to convey him and Mrs. Haroon her love. She told me about the unforgettable party he hosted for them after his operation. She said she was one of the nurses looking after the High Commissioner. It was not my intention to suggest that all our diplomats should conduct themselves like Mr Yousaf Haroon, who no doubt had the means to do so, but we need to give enough allowances to our Foreign Service officers to be able to entertain well and live in a dignified manner.

The Best Learning

Returning back from the skiing course we landed in thick of studies. In about four months we were scheduled to take first year exam. At last the exam date was announced. But there was

good news of one month's holidays after the exams. Alvi and I were lucky in that we got about five hundred pounds in back pay. This was the best gift for us for forth coming holidays. We bought second hand cars with this money as an investment and still had enough for holidays. Alvi bought a Ford and I bought a red colour Singer convertible sports car. That made our lives easier and pleasant. I announced in the class on one Friday if any one wanted to take a lift in my car should meet me at 9 am the next day. John Paule and three other class fellows came to take a lift to town. When we reached Melbourne, the three in the back offered me two shillings each. I declined to take the money. Next weekend I again offered lift but no one turned up except John Paule. I enquired from John the reason for the course mates not accepting a ride in my car. He told me because I refused to take their money they assumed that I did not want to give them the lift. I clarified to the course mates that since I had to go to Melbourne the car was empty and that was why I offered the lift. I explained to them that in our culture we do not take money from our friends for giving them rides in our cars. However if any one borrowed my car he may put some gas in it, which would be acceptable to me. Some understood the rationale while some did not. Occasionally, some one would take a lift in my car. Prior to the car incident I saw John Paule wearing a very good cardigan. I asked him from where he purchased that. He told me that his sister made that for him and he paid her ten shillings. I asked him why he paid her the money as wages, instead of giving her a gift. He understood and appreciated our way of thinking.

It was time for our final exams for first year. Every one was ready and confident. We all did well and graduated to next year. It was a very happy occasion for us because all chores of cleaning would be the responsibility of the new course. The

college also paid lot of attention to social life of cadets. Every month social evening was organized and cadets were encouraged to invite their girl friends to the party. It was always supervised by an officer and his lady wife. Some times senior officers also joined in. The idea was to teach the cadets mannerisms of an officer and a gentleman. The cadets were not allowed to dance to the modern dances in vogue during and after the war, such as jive and swing dancing to fast music because those were considered vulgar by the old generation of senior officers. Only ball room dances such as waltz, foxtrot etc, was allowed. The young generation was totally attuned to new type of dancing and some of them hardly knew the old types. However when the officer in-charge and senior most cadets would leave, the cadets and their partners entertained themselves with fast dances. I heard through the grapevine that all junior officers also loved to dance to the popular fast music. The old men however were out of tune with reality and fighting a losing battle to the 'march of time'. During holidays all cadets went to their homes. We were given a choice by the High Commission to choose where we would like to spend our holidays. We decided to drive to Sydney and informed the High Commission of our choice. Our accommodation was booked in a hotel at Bondi Beach, the most famous beach resort in Sydney for the sophisticated young and the restless. It is known for surf, sun and sand. Our accommodation was paid for and we were given daily allowance for meals. We spent time in exploring Sydney and enjoyed swimming during day and night. The hotel at beach catered for young visitors. We made friends from different parts of Australia and other countries. Melbourne was more conservative like a British city; Sydney was cosmopolitan like an American city. One of the reasons for international ambience was stationing of large American armed forces personnel during World War II; it

was also a favourite city for European immigrants. It had mild climate, excellent beaches, many night clubs and all types of restaurants; and therefore was high on the visitors' list. Over time the city acquired a character different from the conservative Southern and Northern cities. All in all Sydney had much more to offer. As all good things end sooner or later, so did our holidays. It was time for us to head back to our college. On arrival we found every one was in excellent mood and so were we. When we told them our holidays at Bondi beach and the good time we had, their jaws dropped because no one had ever been to Sydney alone in their lives.

After a few days the new entry arrived. Cadets Khurshid Mirza from Rawalpindi and Azim Daudpota from Karachi arrived to join the No. 5th Course. We were happy that from then onwards our course would not be the junior most and therefore spared from doing the chores of cleaning huts, bath rooms, toilets and serving meals to the senior cadets. It certainly felt good to be in the category of seniors. Khurshid and Azim adjusted very easily to the college life. The same routine as of last year was repeated. That was camping followed by academic studies, visits to educational institutions, outdoor activities and games. Addition of Khurshid and Azim further strengthened the hockey team. Our three years stay in Australia made us life-long friends. We would go out together and have fun. Whenever we ate meals in town, Azim after eating with us would go away for about forty-five minutes. When it started happening too often we decided to follow him. We found him sitting in a Hungarian restaurant gobbling down Hungarian goulash. That dish was very close to our meat and onion curry. He felt rather sheepish but told us that local food did not fully satisfy him and therefore he had to sneak in there for a second helping. We also tasted the dish and liked it. The Hungarian restaurant also became one of

the favourite eating places on our list. At that stage, PAF had four cadets and about hundred airmen and apprentices. Therefore Air Attaché Squadron Leader Mustafa Kamal moved his office from Sydney to Melbourne. He hired a house and settled down comfortably. Mrs Kamal did not like to stay in Australia and visited occasionally. The Air Attaché often entertained people and would invite us too. His house was always open to us and for our guests. That became our home away from home. Of course that way he was keeping an eye on us as well. He was a very gregarious person and very pleasant personality. We always felt at home at his residence.

The end of 2nd year was approaching fast and that meant hard work for the annual exams. There was of course a silver lining. We were scheduled to visit home during the month-long holidays. The exams went well and we both passed with good grades. During the holiday break, we went to Sydney to catch BOAC flight to Karachi. Whereas Alvi stayed in Karachi, I took train to Haripur Hazara. It felt good to be back. No matter how good another country may be, the feeling of being on your own soil is unimaginable. The holidays amongst friends and family passed very quickly. Every one wanted to know about Australia and its people. After hearing some good things about Australia, youngsters belonging to well to do families wanted to know to if they could get admission in Australian colleges for studies. They also wanted to know about white Australian policy and discrimination. I told them that Australia would be glad to have them in colleges and they would not experience any discrimination except if they wanted to settle down permanently in Australia. In those days all-White Australia Policy was strictly enforced. Immigration from Asia and Africa was totally unacceptable to the Government. Although the Australians were very short of man power but nursed a fond hope of luring

immigrants from Europe and England. I believe much later white Australian policy was rescinded and, controlled immigration was allowed from non-white countries. On our return journey to Australia, Cadets Sa'ad Hatmi and Muslim Shah accompanied us to join number No 6 Course in RAAF College. The journey was pleasant all the way to Sydney. Alvi, Hatmi and I spent all our money during night stays but Muslim Shah had enough to see us through. While we were at Sydney railway station, Muslim Shah informed us that he had lost his wallet. We informed the liaison officer who contacted the BOAC office and they had the wallet in safe custody; it was happily picked up. That was one more case of honesty that we experienced while in Australia. We reached Point Cook the next day. We were now in third year. Once again, the routine started with the annual camp, followed by hard academic studies for six months to be followed by flying as well as studying flying subjects. This was the most interesting period of our training. We started flying in Tiger Moth aircraft. Since I had about thirty hours of prior flying experience I therefore sailed through the final test on 2nd October 1953. Alvi also passed the final test. On 20th October 1953 we started training on Wirraway aircraft; it was same as Harvard aircraft but had three propeller blades instead of two. Unfortunately Alvi had difficulty going solo on Wirraway. He was therefore taken off flying. I felt very sorry for him. Also I was losing a best friend. Alvi had all the good qualities that any officer should have. The loss was therefore of the PAF. He was sent back to Pakistan. He was dejected but had guts to carry on in life. On his return he asked for release from service to try his luck in some other career. Fortunately he was employed by Pakistan Tobacco Company and there he reached a very high position. I have always carried fond memories of his company during our three years at Point Cook. The year came to an end and it was time to go on leave. This time again it was

Sydney, my favourite city, where I decided to spend holidays. Early January 1954, I came back to college. Now we were the senior most cadets in the college. It gave us lot of privileges such as going to town when ever we wanted, junior cadets cleaning our rooms, allowed to visit Officers' Mess on weekends and one day during the week. Those measures were adopted to gradually assimilate us in the officers' cadre.

Coveted 'Wings'

We were given intensive flying training during that year. On 20th October 1954 I took the final flying test known as "Wings Test. " I qualified the test and became eligible for the coveted flyer's 'Wings'. What a wonderful day in my life! This flying badge was the key that was to open the gates to my destiny. From then on, it was an intense period of flying as a qualified pilot. In one exercise, I was scheduled to fly with Cadet Bachelor, an ardent golf player. The weather was over cast. During our climb to top of the cloud we lost radio contact. We broke clouds at 9,000 feet and started circling to find a gap through which we could descend down. In the process, we kept on drifting south because of strong winds. After about fifty minutes Cadet Bachelor recognized golf club building and the eighteenth hole about seventy miles south of Melbourne. He used to play on that golf course every now and then. He took over the control and spiralled down to 500 feet where we broke clouds right over the club building. From then onwards it was easy route to the base. We were greeted with cheers. It was assumed by the staff that due to wide spread thick clouds and no radio we either had to force land some where or due to shortage of fuel, or bale out on land or over sea. Police were alerted all over Melbourne. All ended well due to benevolence of God.

My Mentors

In my career I have always noted points that I thought worth following or the ones to avoid. Those were from my seniors, compatriots or from my juniors. The list is long but here I would mention two lessons that got embedded in my mind were from Flight Sergeant Cerruty who was in charge of our drill and physical training, route marches and toughening up exercises. The Flight Sergeant was about forty five years old, supporting a big beer belly. During route marches while we were struggling to remain as a group he was always ahead leading the way. One day I asked him how he managed to do that. The Flight Sergeant replied, "For a leader to lead, he has to do better than the ones he leads." He also added, "Cadet Shamim, it has lot to do with your mental strength that you have or you make efforts to develop." He also used to make us take out the furniture from one barrack (store) and put it another barrack that we had cleaned a fortnight earlier. The one that we emptied though, quite clean had to be cleaned again. After some time I could not resist enquiring from him the rationale behind this waste of effort. He laughed and said, "Cadet Shamim you have to keep personnel under your command busy at all times so that they remain disciplined and remain involved in service activities. You know the old saying: an empty mind is a devil's work shop." Our graduation ceremony took place on 11th December 1954. 18 cadets graduated from our course. It was a red letter day in my life for it was the day I was commissioned and the coveted Flying Wing was pinned on my chest. The date of my commission however was back-dated to14th March 1952, the date my course graduated from Risalpur and I was placed on top of the list of my course. We had an unforgettable graduation dinner.

The emotions were happy as well as sad. Sad, because I was leaving behind very good friends whom I might not see again. During my stay I was close to John Paule, John Downing, Bernie Johnson and Peter Larard. But life moves on, you go to new places, make new friends and may lose some on the way. For me it was time to move on.

Flying Jets

The College had recommended to the PAF, through High Commission, for me to undergo jet conversion course on Vampire aircraft. The High Commission informed me to come to Sydney and wait for authorization for the course from Air Headquarters. The authorization was received in early January 1955. The course was to start on 24th February 1955. Therefore I had about one and a half month to wait for the course. The High Commission booked me in a very expensive hotel at Bondi Beach. I found out that fact when I went in the dining room for my first meal. I saw all old people enjoying their meals. They were all multi-millionaires. When I looked at the prices on menu I realized that my daily allowance would barely cater for one meal. I therefore decided to have an occasional meal at the hotel. Whenever I had meals at the hotel I would sit with a couple. Seeing a young man at such an expensive hotel they would ask me if I was a Prince. I jokingly replied that my ancestors were royals, prior to the British took over of India!

After fifteen days I requested the High Commission for a change of hotel to one in down town that suited me financially. I reached William Town Air Base, located about hundred miles from Sydney on 22nd February 1955. Jet Conversion course on Vampire aircraft was scheduled to start on 24th February. It was

an intensive course divided into two parts. First part was for conversion on to jet aircraft and the second part was for intensive operational training. The course was completed on 24th June 1955, and next day I left William Town for Sydney for onward journey to Pakistan.

4
Back in the PAF

I reached Pakistan on 28th June 1955 and reported to Air Headquarters at Mauripur. I was interviewed by Director Training, Wing Commander Eric Hall. He asked me questions regarding my stay in Australia and then informed me that I was posted to No 11 Jet Fighter Squadron (the only jet squadron in the PAF at that time) with effect from 11th July 1955. During the interim period I was granted leave to visit my home. I took the first available train to Haripur Hazara. I spent a most wonderful week with my parents and friends.

In the First Jet Squadron

On 11th July I reported to Adjutant No 11 Fighter Squadron. He informed the junior Flight Commander and directed me to report to him. When I reached his office I requested permission to come in. He was reading a trash book and did not answer me. I kept standing for a while then he lifted his head and gave me permission to come in. With a forced air of authority he asked me who I was and why I had come to see him, although he had been informed by the adjutant a few minutes earlier, and also, my letter of posting was lying on his table. I introduced myself.

He said tersely that I was not to enter his office unless he called me and I was to update the boards in his office but added that the task was to be performed during his absence from the office. I concluded that the officer had some personality problem. Later on, I was told by the pilots that he tried to copy the first Squadron Commander of the No 11 Squadron who later became the C-in-C. In my opinion one should behave and act according to ones own personality rather than try to follow some body else and thus make hash of it. The Adjutant then took me to report to the Squadron Commander, Squadron Leader Zafar Masud. Meeting him was a contrast to the treatment I received in the Flight Commander's office. The Squadron Commander welcomed me as a new member in the squadron. He asked me about my training and other relevant questions. He was a sharp, incisive and intelligent officer. A few days later I realized that he had two distinct personalities; one during working hours and the other after working hours. During working hours he would brook no nonsense and was a hard task master. After working hours he was extremely friendly with his subordinates. I had the good fortune to serve under him four times during my career. I learnt a lot working under him in command as well as in staff appointments.

Our Senior Flight Commander was 'Lucky' Hayat. He was a very colourful person. A good flyer, he demanded a high standard of flying from his subordinates. He was married but frequently came to visit us in the Officers' Mess. Off duty, he was charming and affable. He had the gift of gab and it was said that he could even sell the Eiffel Tower to a gullible individual! Towards the end of the month, one Saturday evening he came to Officers' Mess. He told us to accompany him to La Gourmet, the night club. We all declined because we could not afford the luxury of going to a night club. He told us not to worry as he

would take care of the bill. Happily we went along with him. On arrival there, he told us to wait a few yards from the entrance and went over to the gate keeper. He shook hands with him and asked us to come in. As soon as we entered Lucky quickly surveyed and moved to the corner where two gentlemen were sitting having a drink. He went over to one of them and said hello and the gentleman got up and he hugged him and said it had been a long time since they had met each other. He introduced us to the gentleman who offered us seats and ordered drinks for us. After a while the gentleman realized that it was a case of misidentification and quietly moved to another table. We noticed that Lucky did not introduce himself to him but only introduced us. He really pulled a fast one on the person. We asked Lucky if he knew the person. He said no, he had never ever met him in his life!

On 31st December he came to Officers' Mess and saw us in the bar; he enquired if we had a plan for celebrating the New Year's Eve. We said no, because we did not have the money, being end of the month. He said, "never mind you are my guests, for the evening, I shall take you to Hotel Metropole where Ami Minwalla was the performing artist". He told us to meet him in the lobby at 9 pm. When we reached there he was present in the lobby talking to a hotel employee. He told us that he was going to enter the kitchen and then proceed to the dining hall through a door connecting hall and the kitchen. He asked us to follow him one by one, every three minutes or so. We did that and successfully entered the hall and enjoyed the evening as guest of our Flight Commander. 'Lucky' realized that only salary from the service was insufficient for his standard of living. He therefore requested for retirement from the service. The PAF also came to the conclusion that notwithstanding his exceptional flying ability it was in the best interest of service to accept his request for

retirement. 'Lucky' joined Pakistan International Airline (PIA) where salary was sufficient to take care of his life style. He served in PIA for a while and then migrated to a far off country.

Sajad Haider (affectionately known as 'Nosey') was my room-mate. His uncle, a retired judge, was living in Hotel Metropole Karachi. He invited us to the hotel for a dinner. Since both of us did not have the money for the taxi, we had to borrow from the local banker, our sweeper. He always solved our financial problems after 3rd week of the month. No doubt he used be a happy man, doubling his money in about a week. This time the sweeper brought us *'dwanis'* (two annas coin) worth 5 rupees. We had no choice but to take the loan in that denomination. We had to divide 40 coins each and distributed these in all our pockets. We had to put a lot of paper along with the coins to muffle their noise while walking. We had a good meal with the judge but we had to be careful lest the coins announce their presence while we were in the company of our honourable host. One night, Flying Officer Zaheer could not get a taxi while returning from Karachi late at night. The only transport available was a cycle rickshaw. The owner was unwilling to take such a long journey at night. However Zaheer persuaded him by offering him extra money. Reluctantly the rickshaw driver agreed. When they were half way the driver stopped due to exhaustion and refused to go any further. Zaheer told him to sit back in the rickshaw and he paddled all the way to Officers' Mess at Drigh Road. Zaheer gave the driver full fare but the driver tried to return half the fare because according to him he was only entitled to half the fare. But Zaheer forced him to accept the full fare. There are many such colourful stories of wayward pilots of No 11 Squadron of that era. The leader of the pack was the flamboyant 'Mitti' Masud the Squadron Commander. In those days the pilots were carefree and enjoyed

their lives both on and off duty. These were the very pilots who became senior commanders during the 1965 War. I am proud to be one of them. The names of Jamal (later Air Chief Marshal), Alauddin Ahmad (Shaheed 1965 War), Wiqar Azim (later Air Marshal), late Arshad Choudhry (later Air Vice Marshal), Sajad Haider (later Air Commodore) and more – whose names are recorded in the history books for performing much beyond the call of duty in defence of our Fatherland.

Number 11 Squadron was equipped with 36 Supermarine Attacker aircraft made in Britain for Royal Navy in 1950. It had a tail wheel, the only jet aircraft in the world to have such a dubious distinction. With a new or less careful pilot, the aircraft was prone to spin on the ground and also go off the runway, during landing. It was beset with many technical problems and therefore, was not very reliable to operate. The hydraulic system was the weakest of all, resulting in undercarriage (wheels) not lowering in many an aircraft forcing the pilots to make belly landings. Its pressurization of cockpit was not suitable for countries with hot climate. Layout of the instruments left much to be desired. It was often said in those days that British engineers build aircraft, put the pilot in the cockpit and adjust the instruments and levers around him wherever they would find a space. Attacker aircraft was responsible for many unnecessary accidents in No 11 Squadron. Although it was discarded by the Royal Navy but the British Commander-in-Chief of the Royal Pakistan Air Force convinced the Government, against the recommendations of Pakistani officers, to purchase those aircraft. The Pakistani officers favoured Vampire or Meteor. In fact Attacker's offshoot, the Swift which was a total failure, was being forcefully recommended as replacement for Attacker. Luckily, USA decided to equip the PAF with F-86 Sabre just prior to the final decision to replace the Attacker with the Swift. While I am on the subject of purchase of

aircraft, another British C-in-C forced the Air Staff to purchase 81 Bristol Freighters for transportation. This number would have been good for an air force many times our size. We needed no more than 20 transport aircraft for all our needs. The construction of the aircraft was against all principles of aerodynamics resulting in slow flying speed and less freight carrying capacity. When these aircraft were retired from the air force we had many un-used aircraft rusting away on the tarmac at Drigh Road Station. Eventually all aircraft were sold to a New Zealand company as junk. I would like to stress here that it is a criminal act on the part of any individual, an organization or a government to purchase equipment or weapon system that is of substandard quality and is for wrong reasons. The Freighter entered the service in 1948 and retired in 1966. No 11 Jet Fighter Interceptor Squadron was commissioned in June 1951 under the command of Squadron Leader Rahim Khan who later became C-in-C. The first Flight Commander was Flight Lieutenant F S Hussain who took over the Command of the Squadron in August 1953. F S Hussain was the most celebrated pilot of the PAF, who not only attained fame in Pakistan but also was recognized internationally for his precision low level aerobatics. His performance was awe inspiring. While he was attending an aerial gunnery course in UK in 1949 he not only topped his class but also established a new Commonwealth record. He was one of those rare pilots who can be classed as a born pilot. His contribution towards making flying popular in Pakistan was tremendous. Unfortunately he developed illness, which was not reported by him for fear of being taken off flying, something unthinkable for him. He kept flying till he was able to do so. He died peacefully at the age of 45 with his boots on.

One day I was flying with the Flight Commander as his No 2. While we were returning to base, when we were about four miles out over the sea the leader gave a call to open the speed

brakes. As soon as I did that my aircraft went into a nose dive and aircraft was not responding to elevator control. I was going down fast at about 60 degrees angle. I decided to close my speed brakes and the aircraft started to respond to controls. I eased the aircraft out of the dive about 500 feet above the sea. I joined the circuit and landed about five minutes after the Flight Commander. I put the aircraft down as unserviceable for flying. I discussed that with company technical representative who told me that when speed brakes are opened, flaps come down automatically to offset the tendency of aircraft going into a nose down flight. "In your case that was what happened and you were lucky that your response was correct." He said that was the first case in the PAF but it had happened couple of times in the Royal Navy. The Flight Commander as usual was not amenable to logical reasoning and gave me a solid dressing down. The technical representative found the fault with the hydraulic system and reported that to the Flight Commander who did not say a word to mitigate his harsh outburst during debriefing. Another incident happened a month later. I had gone on a solo exercise to practice aerobatics as well as spin and recovery. I climbed to 30,000 feet and put the aircraft in spin. After a few spins I tried to recover out of spin but the aircraft was not recovering from nose down attitude. With my both hands on the stick I pulled back with all my strength and eventually the aircraft recovered at 5,000 feet. I came back rather perturbed but failed to mention that in my after flight technical report considering that to be of little significance. I thought that it may have been result of my faulty technique in recovery from spin. About a month later Flying Officer Z I Ahmad (ZI) took the same aircraft for the exercise and had the same experience. He had to put both his feet on the dash board to pull back the stick and recovered about 3,000 feet above ground. He reported that to the technical

representative and the engineering officer. When the system was opened up for detailed investigation, to their surprise they found a nut obstructing the movement of controls. They also found the nut was crushed with excessive power that ZI applied to recover from the dive. From hind sight I realized that I should have reported my experience during the flight irrespective how insignificant it appeared to me. While in No 11 Squadron I was promoted to Flying Officer and then Flight Lieutenant. The squadron moved to PAF Masroor and was re-equipped with F-86 Sabre aircraft. I became the Flight Commander.

A Memorable Ferry Flight

F-86 Sabre aircraft were being ferried from France to Karachi by American pilots for handing over to the PAF. The PAF and the USAF decided that in future, ferrying would be undertaken by PAF pilots led by Americans, who were familiar with all civil and military airfields in Europe and Middle East. Luckily, the next ferry was due in October 1957. Nine pilots were selected. These comprised Wing Commander Masroor Hosain (Leader), Squadron Leaders Zaki Butt and Amanullah Khan, Flight Lieutenants Aziz Siddiqui, 'Tich' Mirza, Waheed Butt and myself and Flying Officers Saad Hatmi, and Qurban Baig. The 10th pilot from USAF was to join us in France. He was the overall leader during ferrying. We reached Paris on or about 17th October We were booked in hotel close to Champ Élysées, the famous boulevard in Paris known for side walk cafés and for well-dressed ladies and gentlemen and tourists enjoying the sightseeing. For most of us, that was first visit to Paris. True to its reputation, it was a beautiful city and Champ Élysées the best of all streets or boulevards in the world. In the evening Hatmi and I ventured out to see the city. When we entered Champ Élysées we saw the underground rail

station and noted the name 'Burah'. However when we decided to go back to the hotel we were surprised that both of us had forgotten the names of the hotel as well as the street; also we did not carry with us the card that had the address and the phone number of the hotel, a normal practice when visiting a new city. Yet another surprise was when most of the street lights were switched off, we were disoriented as to our exact location in the area. Since there was no choice we had to wait for the morning to navigate our way to hotel. However, we spent a pleasant time till 4 am with locals and tourists hopping around various cafés. We noted that except for workers, Parisians and tourists sleep after 4 am especially during weekends. Next day I got a call from Wing Commander Masroor to accompany him for shopping for Begum Masroor. I had no choice but to accompany him. We went straight to *'Saris' France*. At the shop they offered us two chairs and two good looking young ladies, one of them from India, to show us *saris* by wrapping around their shapely figures. Wing Commander Masroor pulled out list from his pocket. While he was giving instructions I got a chance to glance at the list. Begum Masroor wanted 6 printed and 6 plain saris and the colours were also mentioned. I quickly thought of colours in rainbow so that I could note if there were any additional colours in the list to discard. It was remarkable to note that the Begum had written down all the colours in a rainbow. It made my task easier to agree with his choice while selecting the saris. I thought the Wing Commander made an excellent purchase. He thanked me for the help and told me that I had a good eye for clothes and colours. Our leader was getting restless to head back to Pakistan whereas all of us were keen to stay back till weather was suitable for flying.

The leader decided that air tests were to be carried out on 23rd October. When we reached Chatfauroux airfield in the morning the weather was unsuitable for tests as the cloud base

was 1,500 feet and extending to 35,000 feet. The leader decided that we were to carry on with air test in close formation; of course it was contrary to all safety regulations. We took off for air tests and flew around in close formation and landed back after 45 minutes. All of us declared our aircraft fit for flying. The leader decided to leave Paris for homeward journey on 26th October. We packed our bags in the morning and handed them over to the handling team for loading in C-130 aircraft. We reached the Chatfauroux Air Base for briefing for onwards journey to Pisa in Italy, our first landing point. We took off in three formations. After 40 minutes of flight the weather was all clear till Pisa and we landed after one and half hour's flight. Since adequate arrangements for refuelling were not available in Pisa, we were told of a delay in take off time. We all decided to see the Leaning Tower of Pisa, one of the Wonders of the World. When we returned, it was afternoon and clouds were gathering around the area. We were also heading East therefore night fall would be early. We all requested the leader to postpone our departure till the next day but he did not agree. We took off late in the afternoon. After take off we started encountering clouds. The leader called us to join in close formation to fly through clouds to reach the top. We broke clouds at 35,000 ft and spread into loose formation. In fact we had to climb to 36,000 feet to remain above clouds. It was getting dark and the leader told us to join in close formation. Close formation at that high altitude was very taxing at night and in clouds. Baig tried to close in on the leader's wing but was unable to do so. He had never been exposed to cloud flying at night on F-86 aircraft and also had no experience of close formation at high altitudes. Sensing danger, the leader told him to fly on No 4's wing and that happened to be me. Baig in fact was totally unfit and dangerous for that trip. I could not

understand the Leader's decision asking him to fly on my wing which was far more difficult position to fly and that too at night. In my opinion even the best pilot will be hard pushed to stay in close formation at that altitude at night. I was all the time scared that Baig will lose us or bang into my aircraft. After two hours flying we reached over-head a military base near Rome. That is when some fun started. When the leader asked for landing instructions the air traffic controller replied 'continue approach'. The leader kept on asking him for instructions for runway in use, visibility, cloud base etc the only answer he got was 'continue approach'. Since we were getting low on fuel the leader decided to descend down according to night flying procedures in close formation. We broke clouds at 500 to 600 feet above ground level. We did low level circuit and started landing. As per rules the leader was to land on left side of the runway, No 3 on right side, No 4 on left side and No 2 who was after me on right side. After landing when I glanced at the rear mirror, I was shocked to see an aircraft approaching behind me at fast speed on my side of the runway. Instinctively I moved to right side of the runway, a very dangerous move in normal circumstances. The aircraft over shot me on the left side. If I had not moved, Baig would have banged into me and we both would have blown into pieces. After landing I questioned Baig why he made landing on the left side of the runway where as he should have landed on the right side. He replied that when Leader asked him to fly on my wing he tried to do that but could not do so. He therefore decided to follow behind me very closely. He said during landing he was very close to me and did not have the courage to be away from me. In fact he did such a tight circuit during final stage of approach that he touched his left drop tank on the ground. The other formations also landed encountering some

difficulties. The USAF pilot after landing found out the air controller on duty had zero knowledge of English and the only word he knew was 'continue approach'. We had approximately ten minutes of fuel remaining in our tanks. We were all shaken up including the USAF pilot because he had added responsibility of nine pilots and aircraft. We all hugged each other for a new lease of life. That called for celebration and we all celebrated to be on terra firma. In the bar, Zaki Butt said that he was very afraid in case he had to eject over the sea because he was told that crocodiles go first for the soft part of the body and he did not want to lose that. That created laughter and the moods changed. After that dangerous flight sanity prevailed and the leader (USAF pilot) decided to be prudent while under taking further flights to our destination. It was therefore decided to have couple of days rest and next take off was scheduled for 29th October. The old lesson that we learnt once again from the above episode was that you are as strong as the weakest link in the chain. On 29th October we took off for Adana Turkey. We landed at Adana after one hour and twenty five minutes. Our next flight to Diyarbakir also in Turkey was scheduled for 1st November. We spent pleasant time at Adana. On 1st November we were scheduled to go to Dahran (Saudi Arabia) via Diyarbakir (Turkey) to refill our fuel tanks for a long journey ahead. When we landed in Diyarbakir we were told that we would be staying the night because our support transport aircraft had to land back in Adana due technical reasons. We were glad for the stay as that gave us a chance to see another city in Turkey. However we had to spend day and night in overalls because our clothes were in transport aircraft. Even though the weather was very cold we were glad for the night stay. In the evening we went to the bazaar in down town. To our surprise we found ourselves as if we were in '*Qissa*

Khawani Bazaar' in Peshawar. The same type of narrow winding streets, small shops serving Turkish coffee instead of green tea as in Peshawar, absence of ladies and the people looked exactly like Pathans with similar dress ie, shalwar-kamiz. This similarity was understandable if we study the history and culture of the people because of their Central Asian origin. We sat down in one of the shops and ordered coffee. When they came to know we were from Pakistan they were very glad to meet us. They refused to charge us for the coffee. We thanked the shop keeper and they all said goodbye with a hug. That made us realise the depth of love and affection the people of Turkey have for us. There is no other country that I have visited where people have similar affinity and brotherly feelings for us. In the morning we went down stairs for breakfast. The waiters brought us bread, cheese, olives and coffee without milk. But Zaki Butt and a few others wanted tea and eggs. Since nobody in the hotel understood English it was difficult to convey to them what we wanted. To make them understand Zaki Butt bent down and uttered 'cluck cluck' like a hen, with a gesture of an egg being laid. Every one laughed and understood the pantomime. Similarly, explained the requirement of milk. Again there was laughter. The pantomime was all the more hilarious since it was performed by a big, burly person like Zaki Butt. One waiter rushed out and from some where brought eggs and milk. We had a hearty breakfast and left for the air base. On 2nd November we took off from Diyarbakir and landed at Dahran (Saudi Arabia) Air Base. That air base was totally manned by USAF. We stayed At Dahran for two days. On 4th November we took off from Dahran and landed at Masroor (Karachi) Air Station. The trip ended successfully because all aircraft were ferried in without any major mishap. However there were many lessons for planners

and supervisors to learn. I thought luck had a lot to contribute towards making ferry trip end as it did.

Instructor Pilot

After returning back from ferry trip I put up my name for training as a Qualified Flying Instructor (QFI). The FIS (Flying Instructors' School) was based at Chaklala, Rawalpindi. I always had fascination for Rawalpindi city. It was God-given chance to spend about four months in that beautiful city. Rawalpindi in those had a clean and beautiful cantonment. I used to pass through Rawalpindi Station while travelling to and from my college at Lahore. On return, I had to spend the night in the resting room at the railway station to catch early morning train to Haripur. I may add here that rest rooms for 1st and 2nd class passengers were very clean with attached bath rooms. A well dressed attendant was present round the clock to cater for your needs. Sleeper beds were available and one could get bedding if not carrying one's own. In those days people used to carry their own beddings in holdalls during journeys. The bedding was also used for sleeping in your train compartment. Railways were one of the best organizations that the British had set up in India. It is sad to admit that after partition gradually the rail services started to decline. I suppose this decline had a lot to do with Railways being a government-run department. Perhaps denationalizing in various sectors might have been beneficial or having competent supervisors at all levels, even hiring such people from other countries, during early period would have been helpful.

When the posting orders arrived in the squadron I was happy to note that Flight Lieutenants Khurshid Anwar Mirza and Azim Daudpota were also on the list. Once again three friends from Australia would be together. However there was one difference.

Azim Daudpota had got married to Sajida Daudpota in Hyderabad and Khurshid Mirza was all set to marry Nasim Shah from Rawalpindi. Being on temporary posting, Azim was not entitled for a house on the Station. He therefore lived in Khurshid Mirza's parents' house till he could find a suitable accommodation for his family. On weekends we would get together at Mirza's parents' home. We played indoor games, went out to see late night movies or enjoyed ice cream. Those were pleasant outings in a clean and beautiful cantonment. I had visited Khurshid's home in Nov 1952 when I came to Pakistan on leave from Australia. He gave me gifts for his family.

Once, when I visited Khurshid's home, in the absence of any male member, I was received by a good looking plumpish girl, about thirteen year's old. She told me her name was Tahira. She offered me tea and asked me intelligent questions regarding her brother. She tried to appear well composed for her age. During my visits to his house while we were under training as QFIs in 1958, I saw her again. She had grown into a very beautiful young lady who carried herself with great poise. She weighed about hundred pounds. She had the same intelligent look that I remembered from my last visit in 1952. I came to the conclusion that she would be an ideal partner if that could be arranged. The family background was also compatible. Since both families were rather conservative, a third party had to get involved to find out the feasibility of a union between two families. Here luck played its part. Azim and his wife were staying at Khurshid's home. I asked Azim to broach the subject with Khurshid and the family. He did and got a positive answer. Perhaps that was the happiest moment of my life. I was getting the partner I was looking for to settle down. The elder ladies of the family were sent to cement the bond between the two families and an engagement was solemnised.

We completed the course on 19th April and were posted to PAF College, Risalpur as Qualified Flying Instructors. Very reluctantly, I had to say goodbye to my fiancée, when leaving for Risalpur. We were the first batch of instructors who had flown jet aircraft. We did encounter unnecessary resentment from instructors, who had not flown jet aircraft, but that was only a passing phase. I was posted to No 1 Squadron and in due course I took over as a Flight Commander.

I may point out that being an instructor is a unique experience. When you start teaching flying to a raw cadet you develop a life-long attachment with him. You are overjoyed when he goes solo and you feel proud when he qualifies for the coveted Wings. You always wish the best for him throughout his career. His successes and achievements make you happy and adversities make you sad.

There was one flying incident that I would like to write during low level cross country exercises with cadet Murtaza. It was a long exercise to teach the student to fly to the limits at low level. We flew for two hours and I told Murtaza to change to the right fuel tank as the left was almost dry. He changed to right fuel tank a few minutes prior to joining the circuit. We had about twenty minutes of fuel left in the selected tank. I told Murtaza to join circuit at low level and land. He joined the circuit and on down-wind, when performing the checks for landing, he unconsciously switched back to left tank that was almost empty. While we were turning finals the engine stopped. I took over the controls, retracted the under carriage in up position, turned on to finals and eased the aircraft to side of the runway on 'kutcha' strip just in case I had to do belly landing. I lowered the undercarriage and luckily, it came down seconds prior to touch down. After touch down I looked inside and saw the fuel tank was correctly selected to the right one that had the fuel. On the

ground the aircraft had no problem in starting. It was taken to the hangar and a thorough inspection was carried but no reason was found for the engine to quit in a very critical phase of landing. A few years later Flight Lieutenant Murtaza was sitting opposite to me in dining room of the Officers' Mess in Peshawar. He asked me if we were able to find out the reason for engine shut off in flight, the day he was flying with me in Risalpur. I told him that I did not know and, since we could not pinpoint the cause, it was classified as 'undetermined'. He told me that I could not have determined the cause because he had changed the fuel tank to the one that was empty during downwind checks and, when I took over control of the aircraft for the forced landing, he realized his mistake and changed back to the correct fuel tank. The confession was offered too late. Many precious hours were wasted to determine the cause of incident that could have resulted in a disaster if we hadn't been close to runway.

The students were allotted to instructors when the new course reported to the college. However if any instructor had more students than he could handle, the new instructors could share with him. Also, if an instructor was posted out his students were re-allocated. Soon, we found ourselves engaged full time on flying duties. That carried on for about six months. When the Flight Commander was posted out, I took over his position. That made the job more interesting. The Flight Commander was required to chalk out a flying schedule for the day. Occasionally, I had to carry out check missions of trainees recommended by their instructors and for clearing students for their solo flight. All this was interesting and kept me fully engaged. In the evening we played games with cadets or squash in the Officers' Mess.

Life in the Officers' Messes is extremely pleasant. You live amongst educated, well-informed, well-dressed and well-behaved officers. The institution of officers' messes in armed forces is

unique. The dining-in- night (formal sit down dinner) is held once a month. It is compulsory for all officers of the base to attend the function which is presided over by the Base Commander (earlier known as Station Commander). The dress code for the event is the mess kit. That service dress is also worn during official dinners. Once a month, an informal evening party for officers and their wives is organized. Retired officers and local dignitaries are also invited to this function. That affords the retired officers to remain in touch with their service. The ladies are not allowed to visit inside the Officers' Mess except when they are officially invited. They can, however visit the 'ladies room' provided for them to enjoy hospitality of the mess with friends and family. The service requires an officer to maintain bachelor status till he is 26 years of age. Although it is a fundamental right of an individual to get married but service does not officially recognize the married status of the officer till he is 26 years old. He is, therefore, denied permission to live outside on his own and is also not provided with financial and other facilities authorized for a married officer. The idea is that he should live in a mess to get to know other officers, learn service etiquettes and improve upon his service as well as general knowledge during initial years of his service life. Also after five to six years of service as a bachelor he becomes financially sound to afford a family and live in a dignified manner.

Wedding

9th July, 1958, the date set for my *Nikah* (legal marriage) with Tahira Sultana Mirza was approaching fast. The two families had decided that it would be a family affair and a few close friends were to be invited. Azim Daudpota and his wife represented both sides. The *Nikah* was solemnized on the due date in a very dignified manner and grand finale was the best

food enjoyed by all. It was prepared by my mother-in-law Mrs Chishti. She was a wonderful lady with tons of forbearance. God had endowed her with very high intellect. Whenever I sought her advice on any issue it was given and, in my opinion, it was always very sound. She never interfered in our lives or volunteered any advice. She was a great lady whom I admired very much. May God give her a place in Heaven. At the end of ceremony we dashed off to the local studio for a photo session. After *Nikah* there was a new meaning to life. Wandering days were over and now there was some one to go to. Occasional trips to Rawalpindi were undertaken either by aircraft or car on holidays. On one weekend I wanted to go but due to bad weather I could not go to Rawalpindi by aircraft. Seeing sadness on my face, Azim offered his services to take me on his motor bike. I think that was in last week of November. We reached in the evening on Saturday. On Sunday we went to cinema to see a movie at 3 PM. By the time we finished dinner it was rather late. Every one insisted that we should go at 4.30 AM in the morning. We agreed to the suggestion. When we reached Hasan Abdal we were terribly cold. Azim's hair was standing straight up on ends. Those days he had a lot more hair than now. Luckily, a tea shop was open and we gulped down four cups of tea each, and warmed ourselves in front of fire. As soon as Azim started his motor cycle a gentleman got out his car, took off his Chitrali cap and put that on Azim's head. He went back to his car and drove off. That was one of the most considerate gestures by the gentleman. May God bless him. The remaining part of the journey to Risalpur was extremely cold. When Azim stopped near the room he was so stiff he could not get off the motor bike. Couple of servants and I lifted him up to his room. Four big buckets of hot water were put in the tub and he was immersed in it. After about half an hour his legs and limbs started

functioning. Since I was sitting behind Azim I had far less exposure to wind. No doubt Azim's size also gave me reasonable protection. I thanked him and he replied that it had been a great adventure. At last 25th January, 1959, the 'D day' for our wedding (*Rukhsati*, when the wife actually leaves her parents house with her husband) was a few days away. Khurshid Mirza and I took leave to make preparations. The two families decided to invite only families and close friends to the wedding. I came in, mounted on a horse to Tahira's house. The wedding went off very well except for the heavy rain that lasted till we sat in the car for our journey to Haripur. In our part of the world, to be blessed with rain is considered a good omen. At my house Tahira had to get all dolled up for ladies of Haripur to see the bride; she looked stunningly beautiful. The ladies came in droves and to examine her from all angles. Their comments were that the bride was very beautiful but rather skinny; she weighed only 95 lbs. Tahira cleared the test with full marks. That whole affair lasted for three excruciating days for her but the reward of lavish compliments must have pumped plenty of adrenaline in her to undergo that ordeal. It was time to rescue her and we decided to move to Risalpur. Squadron Leader Rehman, a delightful officer, offered us a large room till we were allotted a house in the cantonment. That was a very thoughtful assistance for us. We would forever remain grateful to him and Begum Rehman for very timely help. Unfortunately he died rather young. May God give him the best abode in Heaven. Soon after our marriage Khurshid Mirza was posted out to Royal Air Force College, Cranwell as an instructor. He therefore decided to get married and take his wife along with him. The marriage took place in Rawalpindi and was attended by close family and friends. Life at the college was a routine affair. We visited Rawalpindi every alternate weekend to have an outing.

Command of No 1 Cadet Squadron

In the old organization, Flying Wing, Directorate of Studies and Physical Training Squadron were working almost independently. In June 1959, PAF College was reorganized. It was decided by Air Headquarters to form a Cadets' Wing, commanded by a Wing Commander, and composed of two squadrons. No 1 and No 2 Squadrons were commanded by Squadron Leaders, with necessary staff. Henceforth, all students were placed under the command of Officer Commanding, Cadets' Wing. All other organizations ie, Flying Wing, Directorate of Studies and Physical Training Squadron would assist the Cadets' Wing to achieve the goal of training the cadets. I was promoted to Squadron Leader in June 1959 and posted as Squadron Commander, No 1 Squadron. Squadron Leader Waheed Butt was posted as Squadron Commander, No 2 Squadron. We started with introducing folders for every cadet in which all their activities were to be recorded eg, flying, studies, physical training and development of officer-like- qualities. Those would be readily available for reference by the Commandant or Air Headquarters rather than collecting reports from individual organizations. The check on the progress of cadets thus became very easy. We introduced many such reforms during our tenure.

Our First Child

I was posted out to PAF Station Sargodha as Wing Operations Officer, of No 33 Fighter Wing in 1961. By this time we had been blessed with our first daughter Farah. Tahira had gone to Rawalpindi to her parents' house for delivery. I was in Sargodha at that time. Although I had applied for leave close to

the dates the doctor had suggested, but Farah ('Fairy') had decided to come ten days early. She was born at night and I flew over to Rawalpindi in the morning. It was a delightful experience to see her and hold her in my arms. She was very pretty. She had long and slim fingers. We all assumed that she would be an artist. She became an artist but did not take it up as full time profession but kept it as a hobby. She has painted many paintings, and is a published artist.

First Operational Command

In January 1963 I was attached to Fighter Leader School for Fighter Leaders' Course. After completing the course I was posted as Squadron Commander of No 11 Fighter Interceptor Squadron on 3rd March 1963. It is dream of a fighter pilot to command a fighter squadron. Commanding a fighter squadron is the first ladder to qualify for higher operational commands, provided one performs well in that assignment. I trained my squadron very well during my tenure. The Fighter Leaders' School declared No 11 Squadron as the top squadron of the year amongst Sabre Squadrons, during their annual inspection tour of all PAF fighter squadrons. A fighter squadron is a composite organization. It has about 20 pilots on its strength. It is headed by a Squadron Commander who has two Flight Commanders, an engineer, about 200 airmen technicians (30 airmen during our times as maintenance was then centralised and the bulk belonged to the Maintenance Wing)) and an Adjutant with adequate staff to run his organization. The Squadron Commander is required to train his pilots according to the mission allotted to him by Air Headquarters. A squadron's operational capability is dependent upon the leadership and fighter flying capability of the Squadron Commander. The PAF therefore pays a lot of attention in

selecting Squadron Commanders. On 27th January our second daughter was born in CMH Rawalpindi. She was beautiful with big hazel eyes and golden brown hair. She was very alert and seemed unconcerned for keeping us on edge by delaying her arrival for about ten days.

Command of No 33 Fighter Wing

I commanded No 11 Squadron for about a year. On 11th January 1964, I was promoted to Wing Commander and reposted as Officer Commanding of No 33 Fighter Wing at Sargodha. No 33 Wing was composed of three F-86 Sabre squadrons, one F-104 Starfighter squadron and one reconnaissance squadron equipped with RT-33 aircraft. No 9 Squadron (F-104s) was commanded by Squadron Leader Middlecoat, No 11 Squadron (F-86s) by Squadron Leader M M Alam, No 15 Squadron (F-86s) by Squadron Leader Arshad Chaudhry, No 5 Squadron (F-86s) by Squadron Leader Sarfaraz Rafiqui and No 20 Squadron (RT-33) by Squadron Leader by M M Ahmad. All the Squadron Commanders were very experienced and professional pilots. Their Squadrons were in top form for any challenge that the country might have to face.

Here it would be pertinent to outline the responsibilities of the Officer Commanding, Flying Wing. He ensures that the flying task allotted to squadrons is carried out, issues local flying orders, and keep an eye on discipline in the air as well as on the ground. He regularly flies with different squadrons to monitor their training program. He also decides whether to stop flying or restrict flying during low visibility or adverse weather conditions. He ensures adequate flying hours are made available to squadrons in liaison with Officer Commanding Engineering Wing (earlier known as Maintenance Wing). He also ensures

flight safety remains a major consideration but never at the cost of operational training.

Review of Operational Training

During my tenure as Wing Operations Officer and OC No 11 Fighter Squadron, I had observed some glaring shortcomings in operational flying training of pilots at our base. The first was that the minimum height for low flying had been raised higher than the stipulated 250 feet AGL (above ground level). The second was that except for few very senior pilots, all others pilots of No 33 Wing had lost currency in night flying. Only F-104 pilots remained current in night flying because their role involved night interceptions. Those deviations from rules were enforced locally by Sargodha Air Station, for flight safety reasons. No doubt there were too many birds flying around Sargodha Station, especially during harvest seasons resulting in bird hits. Also large herds of wild boars would frequently cross the runway at night resulting in accidents. Undoubtedly the base was facing these problems but solution could have been found by tackling the problems. It was a classic case of tail wagging the dog. I discussed these two deviations of rules that had reduced operational readiness of pilots with the recently posted Station Commander, Group Captain Zafar Masud, a very experienced, top-rated fighter pilot. He was shocked to know lack of those capabilities in a fighter force. He directed that with immediate effect flying height for low flying would be 250 feet above ground level and all pilots were to acquire night currency within a month. He directed Officer Commanding of the Administrative Wing to make elaborate plans to combat bird menace around the airfield and to stop wild boar entry into the airfield area by posting guards around the airfield. Where as implementing minimum height for low flying only

required issuing of fresh orders, elaborate planning was required to make about 60 pilots current in night flying. To speed up the process, all experienced pilots who had flown at night in any aircraft in past two years were cleared to fly at night. A T-33 aircraft with two instructors was flown in from PAF Station Masroor to give check rides to inexperienced pilots. It took us a month to restore night flying currency for all pilots in the Wing. The Squadron Commanders were delighted with the two decisions because they knew that during war, pilots would have to fly low level; and many returning pilots from evening missions would be required to land in the evening or at night.

During war pilots fly low level ie, 250 ft AGL or lower, to avoid detection by the enemy radars so as to ensure element of surprise when flying inside the enemy territory. Pilots then pull up one to two minutes prior to reaching the target to position themselves for the attack thus exposing the aircraft for minimum time to ack-ack (anti-aircraft artillery) gunners and missiles operators on the ground or aircraft guarding the target. After the attack pilots hug the ground to avoid detection by the radars and the enemy pilots on air patrol duties in the area.

Air Display

Air Marshal Omar Dhani, C-in-C Indonesian Air Force was to be the chief guest at an air show at Peshawar to be held on 27th October 1964. The special feature was nine F-86 Sabre aircraft formation aerobatics. This task was given to No 33 Wing and I was to prepare the team for this show in one month. I gathered the team and started the training with two aircraft and thereafter adding additional aircraft till all nine were in place. During one of the rehearsals while diving to gather speed to execute a loop, I saw a big kite coming head on towards my

aircraft in a dive. There was nothing I could do to avoid it. Any unusual motion on my part would have resulted in the biggest accident in the history of aerobatics flying. In a few seconds it hit my wind shield with a thud and bounced off in pieces, splashing blood all over my wind shield. In the show down with the kite I was the winner! If it had been a couple of feet lower it would have gone into the intake of the aircraft resulting in my engine blowing into pieces. That may have resulted in multiple mid-air collisions also. We completed the rehearsal and landed safely. Only my two wingmen, saw the kite hitting my wind shield, the others were unaware of the danger they had been exposed to. A fighter pilot has a nonchalant attitude if he survives an accident; he merely shrugs it off as if nothing of any consequence happened. My team was ready for the show before time. On D-day our performance was good. I cannot put it in better words than what is written in *The Story of the Pakistan Air Force – A Saga of Courage and Honour.* It is my pleasure to quote: "The other special event was a 'first in the PAF' full aerobatic demonstration by a nine-man team. Unlike the 16 F-86s in the 1958 display which only performed a loop, this 9-Sabre formation, led by Wing Commander M A Shamim, executed a complete sequence of aerobatics including loops, rolls, wing-overs and rolls-off-the-top, maintaining impeccable diamond formation through out. An additional feature of their demonstration, which was also for the first time in the PAF, was the use of smoke trails which added to the spectacular effect of their final downward bomb-burst."

"Sabres Nine – 1964. The following pilots took part in the formation:- The Team: Wing Commander M Anwar Shamim, Squadron Leader M Arshad, Squadron Leader Sarfaraz Rafiqui, Squadron Leader Mukhtar Ali, Squadron Leader Muniruddin Ahmad, Squadron Leader M M Alam, Flight Lieutenant M

Masud Khalid, Flight Lieutenant Yusaf A Khan, Flight Lieutenant Yunus Hussain. A striking feature of this 1964 aerobatics team of the PAF was that five out of these nine pilots were awarded the Sitara-e-Jurat during the 1965 War. Of these pilots, Rafiqui, Munir and Yunus attained Shahadat and M M Alam became an ace. The leader, Wing Commander Anwar Shamim, later became the Chief of the Air Staff."

Army Exercise 'Agility'

At the end of 1964 I was detailed to attend briefing for Army Exercise 'Agility' at Kharian which was being conducted under the Command of Lieutenant General Bakhtiar Rana the Corps Commander. During the briefing the Corps Commander asked me how many sorties would I be able to provide to Corps for close support in war. I replied that what ever quota we were allotted, we would be able to meet and simultaneously fight the battle for air superiority for three to four days. After achieving air superiority over the enemy air force, we would concentrate on close support as well as combat air patrols (CAPs) over the battle area to stop enemy air attacks on our ground forces. Not believing what I had said, there was laughter all around. One Major got up and said that he had attended the PAF Staff College recently and that was not what he had learnt during the course. Lieutenant General Rana appreciated my enthusiasm but asked me on what grounds was I basing my assumptions. I told him that our pilots were more trained as compared to the Indian pilots. As a matter of routine PAF pilots flew about 25 hours a month compared to 5 to 7 hours flown by the Indian pilots. Our aircraft serviceability was over 80% where as in the IAF it was barely 40 to 45%. Our fighter force was mainly composed of one type of aircraft i.e. F-86 Sabre, while the Indians had many types

of aircraft in their inventory and therefore, that many problems resulting in low serviceability. The Hunter fighter aircraft had a slight advantage over F-86 Sabre in speed and rate of climb but our aircraft was superior in close combat and additionally carried two air-to-air missiles, a capability they did not possess. Our trump card was the F-104 whereas they were in the process of inducting MiG-21 as a counter weight to the F-104. It would take them at least a year to develop full operational capability in the new weapon system. This was the basis of my analysis of operational capability of two air forces. While summing up, Lieutenant General Rana appreciated my reasoning but said that the Army would plan according to commitment made by the PAF in the official war plans.

5
Challenge and Response

Prior to partition of India the division of assets had been settled by the three parties ie, UK, India and Pakistan. However after partition India did not hand over the rightful share of assets of armed forces to Pakistan. Thus armed forces of Pakistan were placed in a weak position with respect to the equipment required for defence of the country. All the training for the three services and the armament factories were located in India and that further compounded the difficulties. In fact we had to start every facet of building of our forces from almost zero. We had a dedicated cadre of personnel (222 officers and 2,342 airmen) who, though few in numbers, were determined to cross every hurdle to give our country an air force, second to none, as desired by the Father of the Nation.

The security of a nation is a result of sacrifice the people make to spend large amount of financial resources to build their armed forces to defend the country against the threat. If the resources are not available to spend on defence the country seeks alliances with other countries to give her the strength to jointly face the threat. Consequently we joined South East Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) in 1954 and Baghdad pact (Britain, Iran, Turkey and Pakistan); that became CENTO in 1958 with

addition of USA (minus Iraq). Whereas SEATO was to check communist expansion in South East Asia and CENTO was to check Soviet influence in the area; the aim of these pacts was ostensibly for mutual cooperation and protection. For us, it also turned out as a counter-balance to powerful India, politically and militarily, by acquiring latest weapons for the armed forces which we could never have afforded due to lack of financial resources, especially the foreign exchange element. During his visit to China, President Ayub Khan appeared rather uncomfortable, being a member of SEATO, which was meant to block Chinese expansion in South East Asia, but Mr Chou en Lai, perceiving his discomfort, assured him that what was in the interest of Pakistan was also in the interest of China. He further told him that since China was not in a position to provide all the military equipment needed for defence of Pakistan he should acquire those from Americans to safeguard his country. That put President Ayub at ease and he understood the statesman-like approach of Chinese leaders to our problems. Chinese leaders are highly pragmatic in their approach in dealing with inter-state relations. They do not believe in black and white (either with us or against us) approach. They develop relations on a long term basis. By being members of the pacts, in addition to financial help for development, we received adequate military aid to modernize our armed forces. The PAF received most modern aircraft ie, F-104s, F-86s, T-33s, RT-33s and B-57 bombers alongwith two high-powered radars for our Air Defence System. We were also exposed to modern techniques of warfare through courses in USA. By 1959 we had fully absorbed the weapons and had attained very high degree of proficiency in the Air Force. We were ready for any challenge from the enemy because we were fully prepared with our response.

Rann of Kutch Skirmish

In 1962 the Indians were badly mauled in the Sino-Indian conflict. In addition to support from Soviet Union, the Americans quickly jumped in to supply a lot of military equipment to India. In fact the Americans made a hasty rush to help India in the fond hope of wooing them away from Soviet Union, a pipe dream at that time. The Indians were too clever for them; they accepted the help but remained aligned with the Soviets. In 1958 we sent a few officers for instructor's course on T-33 aircraft in Germany at an American air base. Flight Lieutenant Tawab (later Chief of Air Staff Bangladesh Air Force) told me that while he was having a drink in the bar, he met an American CIA officer who had quite a few drinks and was less than sober. While talking about Pakistan he said, "If we ever get India on our side we will drop Pakistan like a bad fish."

By 1965 India had revamped their armed forces and was ready to redeem their honour lost in 1962 war with China. They decided to test their prowess in desolate area known as Rann of Kutch in Sindh in the part of territory belonging to Pakistan but disputed by India. The Indians wanted the whole area of Rann of Kutch for themselves because a Soviet geological survey had reported the possibility of oil in the area. In April, they launched multi-directional attacks to capture the disputed territory by force. The attacks were of limited nature and localized to the area. They had the backing of one fighter bomber squadron, one recce squadron, one Canberra bomber squadron, and a detachment of Gnats. These were based at Jamnagar air base. In addition, they had one Canberra squadron, two Vampire squadrons and one maritime recce squadron based at Poona. The PAF had 2 F-86 squadrons, 2 B-57 squadrons and a detachment of F-104s based at Mauripur Air Station. It was considered a superior force to theirs

but the area that required support was at the fringe of coverage of our aircraft and therefore, did not permit enough time to pilots to stay over the target. Timely intervention by the Pak Army and superior leadership displayed by brave and inspired Pakistani commanders brought about clear-cut victory for Pakistan and thus prevented the occupation of the area by the Indian Army. This second unexpected reverse for the Indian Army must have been a sore point with them and perhaps led to a longing to avenge this stigma at an appropriate time and place of their choosing. By mutual consent, the Air Chiefs of IAF and PAF, decided against employing their respective air forces in support of land skirmishes to keep the land fight localized to the area. The land battle in the Rann of Kutch thus, did not get international attention. However Air Headquarters had issued instructions to mobilize the PAF in case of escalation and named this mobilization as 'Desert Hawk.' The Government of Pakistan did not want escalation and proposed to settle the dispute peacefully through negotiations but the Indians were not agreeing to our proposal. The British Government with efforts of Prime Minister Harold McMillan, with the backing of USA, succeeded in bringing about the cease fire and a reluctant truce. The Indians did not like the unexpected results in Rann of Kutch. Sensing the belligerent mood of the public and the armed forces for revenge, Prime Minister of India Mr Lal Bahadur Shastri announced his intentions to "choose a front of our liking." He threw down the gauntlet, so to speak. Consequently, the violations along ceasefire line increased; whereas these were 20 in 1963 and 700 in 1964, but there was big jump to over 2,000 during first seven months of 1965 as reported by the UN Military Observers Group. It was a deliberate act to heighten the tension as a prelude to a possible show down.

The PAF High Command decided to be vigilant, not only in Kashmir, but all along the border with India as it was opined that

even if the war starts in Kashmir it will not remain localized. President Field Marshal Mohammad Ayub Khan visited PAF Station Sargodha on 20th May 1965; part of his address is reproduced:

"India has at the slightest pretext mobilized her forces against Pakistan and now is trying to intimidate us. There is limit to this. I too sometimes feel like you feel, that if war is to come then let it come and let's settle it once for all. But my policy is that we shall not provoke war because it is not in the interest of India or Pakistan. War is a terrible thing; if it takes place between India and Pakistan let me assure you whatever the consequences, we are going to be put back for 10 or 15 years and we can't afford to waste this time. We are racing against time; our population is growing; the ambitions of our people are growing; the people are demanding better things in life. This means that we have to have peace; peace within and peace without in order that we can build our society and country. And that's a gigantic task. Pakistan's policy therefore is peace but not peace at any price."

Indians continued with pin pricks along the borders in the north and south despite clear under taking to remain within 10 miles of the border. These were probing missions to test our reactions. During one such mission the PAF forced down an IAF Ouragan fighter, while on an armed recce mission near Badin in the south. Flight Lieutenant Rana L C Sidda was taken prisoner but was repatriated to India on 14th August 1965 as a good will gesture on Independence Day.

A Ground of Their Choosing

After the Rann of Kutch skirmish, Mr Shastri the Indian Prime Minister had said that India would respond at a ground of

their choosing. That ground was Kargil, a far-off strategic place in northern Kashmir, where an Indian army with 1,000 men attacked and over ran three posts manned by a section of 10 men defending each post. Feeling buoyant by this victory, they started preparing for the greater objective of nibbling away territory in that area to ultimately conquer the whole of Azad Kashmir. This was the task given to the Indian Army. Their next target was Tithwal Sector south of Muzaffarabad, the capital of Azad Kashmir. They had success in capturing high ground in Tithwal and thus threatening Muzaffarabad via Neelum Valley, certainly a dangerous move. They also made a thrust in Uri-Poonch sector where their gains were substantial. They attacked with a brigade supported by divisional artillery and were able to subdue a small contingent of troops guarding the area. When Minister of Defence, Mr Chavan announced these successes and capture of Haji Pir Pass in Indian Parliament they all started triumphantly jumping with joy and congratulating each other. The Indian troops were also reported concentrating in the southern area in Indian-held Kashmir from where a thrust through the Munawar gap could threaten the very security of Pakistan. Therefore the new Indian gains in the north and the threat from the south was very serious and these had to be countered. Thus operations Gibraltar and Grand Slam were conceived in aid of Azad Kashmir forces.

Change of Command in the PAF

On 22nd July 1965 Air Marshal Asghar Khan retired from the PAF after serving for eight years as the Air Chief. He was responsible for building the air force into a matchless well-knit war machine. He had meticulously prepared 'war plans' and discussed them thoroughly with the top operational commanders.

He can truly be called the builder of the air force. He was an exceptional thinker and administrator. He handed over the PAF Command to Air Marshal Nur Khan on 23rd July 1965. Air Marshal Nur Khan having served as Managing Director and Chairman of Pakistan International Airlines for six years was posted back to Pakistan Air Force to take over the command of the Pakistan Air Force. He brought with him rich experience of working in business environments. He was adventurous, bold and a top class fighter pilot. Although it was rather wrong time to change the command when war was looming large on the horizon, it did not take very long for Air Marshal Nur Khan to get to know the strength, capability, plans and war readiness of the PAF.

Operation 'Gibraltar'

While on a visit to General Headquarters in Rawalpindi Air Commodore A Rahim Khan, Assistant Chief of Air Staff Operations (ACAS-O) was informed, in passing, of major operations being planned in Chamb-Akhnur in held Kashmir in retaliation to Indian attacks in vital Haji Pir and Bharat Gali area. The operations were named 'Gibraltar' and 'Grand Slam' and these were to be launched in tandem. It was a bolt out the blue for him as the PAF was never informed during the planning stage. This was one of the typical cases of lack of trust or may be 'gung ho' spirit, while planning operations by the Pak Army. When on 22nd July 1965 Air Commodore Rahim informed the two Air Marshals (Asghar Khan and Nur Khan) of the operational plans under preparation in the GHQ, they were totally flabbergasted. Nur Khan, after assuming the command on 23rd July, visited General Musa the next day who confirmed the planning and launching of operation 'Gibraltar' consisting of mujahids from Azad Kashmir and army jawans in held Kashmir

so as to create instant rebellion. This was to be followed by operation 'Grand Slam' across Tawi River, in disputed territory, but tried to assure the Air Chief that it would remain a localized operation in disputed Kashmir. These operations were necessitated according to him because of the Indian occupation of vital part of Azad Kashmir in Haji Pir salient, a very dangerous move for Pakistan. Air Marshal Nur Khan came back aghast at the Army Chief's perception and analysis of the fallout of the most dangerous operation. It was naive to think that by going for the jugular of the Indians in Kashmir, they would not react sufficiently as to precipitate an all-out war. It was also a clear case of lack of interaction and understanding for joint planning of operations between the three services, ministries of defence, and foreign affairs to formulate a comprehensive defence policy. There was, no doubt, tremendous good will for Pakistan and a lot of resentment for India in the held Kashmir but 'Operation Gibraltar' was planned in a hurry and launched in even a greater hurry. No proper planning was done in advance to arrange safe places for personnel where they could get shelter, arms and ammunition; and most important - time to organize a cadre of able-bodied sympathizers and opinion leaders. Those who were launched neither knew the language nor were familiar with the terrain. It was simply assumed that by sudden appearance of these persons, there will be a spontaneous uprising. The process of induction was also too fast not be noticed by the Indian military. Indians countered with the capture of Haji Pir, the high ground salient, to break the link between northern and southern parts of Azad Kashmir. Operation 'Gibraltar' was a total flop; all those air dropped or sent into held Kashmir were either caught or killed and some were lucky to make it back to Azad Kashmir. Extremely dangerous night low level supply air drops in the valleys were

under taken by PAF C-130 transport aircraft to supply the trapped men. To ascertain the degree of dangerous air drops, Air Marshal Nur Khan himself flew in the first sortie of the night drops in a C-130 aircraft with Wing Commander Zahid Butt. In the first mission Air Marshal Nur Khan flew as a co-pilot to assess the degree of difficulty and danger in undertaking such missions. The following is the report of the first mission as described by the most daring pilot Wing Commander Zahid Butt:

"We took off from Chaklala, soon after 0200 hours, on 23rd August, with 28,000 lbs of guns, rations, ammunitions and other supplies. At my request, an electronic intelligence (Elint) B-57, flown by Squadron Leader Iqbal, was arranged to fly at 40,000 ft to monitor the Indian radars, although I was quite convinced that the IAF had no capability to operate their fighters at night. But we picked up indications of the Indian radar at Jammu being switched on as soon as we entered the area. The B-57 was also intended to act as a vital radio link with our own ground radar, since we were out of direct VHF (radio) range with the ground stations because of the intervening high terrain. Finally, it was scheduled to report on weather conditions for final go or no-go decision. As it happened, and despite reports to contrary, the weather in the mountains was such that normally I wouldn't have taken off even during day light for this sort of mission, but this was an emergency. Soon after takeoff, we entered cloud at 1,200 ft, emerging on top at about 26,000 ft, and we did not see the ground again before the descent. Even Nanga Parbat was not visible, and the Shardi turning point had to be found and identified by dead reckoning plus interpretation of the radar picture. From Shardi, which is the entrance to the valley of Srinagar in Indian held Kashmir, we were required to descend southeast from 26,000 ft 14,000 ft within about two minutes, speeding up to 200 knots to let down at 5,000 ft per minute or so, depressurizing in case of battle

damage. The intention was to pick up the large Wular lake at Srinagar on radar, and then to come down below cloud for visual contact to reach the initial reference point (IP) or set course point, of Bandipura leading up to our DZ (drop zone). If I remember rightly, it was about 8 to 9 miles from Bandipura to the Qasim DZ on a track of about 170 degrees. We were still blind when we began our let down, and I added one degree to the steering instructions passed on by my navigator Flight Lieutenant Rizwan, to stay well clear of the peaks extending up to 13,500 ft. It was also important to overshoot Bandipura at 14,000 ft, since it was backed by a mountain 16,000 ft high. But we came out over the lake in thin cloud and haze, and, although it was pitch black, we got the vital visual pinpoint on Bandipura. From then on, our flying had to be extremely precise to ensure an accurate drop. One of the problems was that to avoid overshooting, we had only 43 seconds to reduce our speed from 260 knots to the maximum for ramp opening (for dropping the cargo) of around 148 knots. From then onwards, no variation in speed was permissible if an accurate drop was to be made, but I was quite certain that we were not going to have a smooth ride. DZ altitude was about 1,200 ft above sea level, but IP and the target, at the predetermined dropping height of 14,000 ft above ground level, staggering along with the ramp open and flaps down, we again ran into turbulent cloud and snow. Four or five miles to our left was a 16,000 ft peak, and our only available clearance was over the ridge to the right, down the Srinagar valley. Fortunately there was little wind, as it was snowing, and only two track corrections were needed during the run in. When only a minute or so short of the DZ, still at 148 knots, turbulence in the storm cloud, with accompanying lightning, was so severe that aircraft's speed dropped down to below 100 knots and I couldn't maintain course accurately enough to continue. I therefore decided to abort this

run, straightaway opened up to emergency power and told my crew to close the ramp and clean up the aircraft. With its heavy load, the aircraft climbed very sluggishly and we had to do more of a chandelle or a wing over than climbing turn since I couldn't go further without being blocked by one peak, and there was a ridge on the other side hemming us in. There was a brief exchange with Rizwan who expressed confidence that he would be able to locate the IP on Wular Lake again, and give me another run-in; the C-in-C endorsed our decision to have another go. We regained radar contact with the lake and identified Bandipura visually in position for another run. This time, I came down 200-300 ft lower after reducing speed and opening the ramp, in an attempt to clear the cloud and turbulence, but told navigator to prepare to drop blind, on timing and with the help of radar. We missed the turbulence on the second run, although we were again in cloud, and didn't see a thing until almost at the end of the nine-second time count for the drop. As the navigator counted down to 'three, two, one, NOW' the cloud parted for a moment, and there in the blackness the C-in-C and my co-pilot saw the twinkling lights of three the bonfires marking the DZ. They were directly underneath us, which meant we had delivered our entire load successfully."

Had it not been for our brave Air Chief on board, this daring mission would have remained just a yarn or a scene out of Hollywood movie. In fact all pilots of the transport squadron who flew those missions faced similar degree of hazardous conditions during their sorties, but they pressed on, regardless of the consequences, to accomplish their missions. These pilots set the tenor of PAF operations for the war that PAF was expecting soon. It was also the first operational mission by the PAF for 'Gibraltar-Grand Slam' and September 1965 War. It was later confirmed by Pak Army's 12 Division that an accuracy of about half a mile had been achieved, which was remarkable for a blind

drop. The food, supplies and ammunition drops were highly appreciated by army personnel on the ground and gave them more vigour to pursue their task.

Digressing from the flow of events I would like to mention the case of dropping guerrillas in enemy area in South Vietnam. Ho Chi Minh, the President of North Vietnam advised his Army Commander General Vo Nguyen Giap to launch guerrilla fighters in South Vietnam. The General replied that he required 10 years to plan and place a guerrilla force in the occupied territory. He said that first we have to prepare safe places for them so they are absorbed in local population and can get the necessary arms and ammunition etc from safe place for their task; otherwise he said they will be like fish out of water and would be caught and butchered. The President told the General to plan and launch them after 10 years or when ever he is ready to launch the guerrillas. When all preparations were ready the guerrilla fighters were launched and the rest is history of American defeat in Vietnam.

Operation 'Grand Slam'

When the desired results of Operation 'Gibraltar' were not achieved and pressure of Indian operations in Haji Pir and Bharat Gali increased, Operation 'Grand Slam' was launched in Akhnur on 1st September 1965 in the early hours of the morning to divert Indian effort away from the two strategic points and choke the entry point from India into Kashmir. The plan was undoubtedly brilliant and audacious, but unworkable in isolation. It was launched with one infantry division and two armoured battalions. No doubt the Indians were taken by surprise by the Pak Army's move. Brigadier Mahan Singh, Commander 191 Infantry Brigade, was faced with a critical situation and called

for immediate air support. His request was approved but rather late in the afternoon, thus paving way for clash of air forces in this area. The nearest base that was tasked for giving close support was Pathankot. It had two squadrons of Mysteres and one squadron of Vampires. Though the Vampires were ready for action since morning, the first formation of four took off at 1650 hours led by Squadron Leader Dahar. They went into action as soon as they reached the battle areas. However, they started attacking their own army positions. Major General Sandhu recounts the event in his book 'History of Indian Cavalry' in the following words: "They leisurely proceeded to destroy three AMX-13 tanks of India's own Lancers, plus the only recovery vehicles and the only ammunition vehicle available during this hard pressed fight. The second flight attacked Indian infantry and gun positions, blowing up several ammunition vehicles." One Vampire piloted by Flight Lieutenant Pathak was also hit by friendly fire but managed to reach own territory and bailed out. This incident was never publicized at that time. The employment of air power by Indians added a new dimension to the heretofore localized war in Kashmir.

PAF on Alert

After meticulous analysis the PAF High Command came to the conclusion that Indians were more than likely to redeem their honour lost in 1962 war with China and in April 1965 in Rann of Kutch with Pakistan. PAF decided to be on the safe side and considered it better to be prepared than to get caught by surprise by the enemy. Therefore, on 29th July 1965, the Air Headquarters issued war plans to bases for war deployment and designated targets for the first attack. It was envisaged by the planners that it was of paramount importance to reduce the

superiority of numbers of the IAF by attacking them on ground on their airfields and deny them radar cover by destroying their radars. This was all part of battle for air superiority so that IAF is denied the ability to support their Army. After having achieved some degree of balance, which would require a few days, the PAF would then carry out Combat Air Patrols (CAPs) over the battle field, interdiction of lines of communications and give close support to our Army. However, later it was decided to extend limited support to the Army even at the start of war, notwithstanding huge effort required to establish air superiority. The IAF on the other hand had the ability to undertake all operations simultaneously due to large numbers of aircraft in their inventory. In this context it was important to attack them on their airfields to pin them down and also to reduce their numbers. The plan envisaged the PAF fighter bombers from Peshawar, Sargodha, Lahore and Mauripur to simultaneously attack IAF aircraft on the airfields of Pathankot, Adampur and Halwara in the north and Utterlai and Jamnagar in the south. Also radar stations at Amritsar, Ferozepur and Ambala in the north; and Porbandar in the south were part of the first attack. The timing of the missions was 15 minutes before sunset. Lahore was a peace time station but was activated for war with 8 F-86s as part of the strike missions. B-57 bombers were to attack airfields at Jamnagar, Adampur and Halwara through out the night, and some bombers were to attack Agra and Palam in second run at night after refuelling. The squadron at Dhaka was to strike Kalaikunda by dawn on second day. So this was the first day of plan; rather over ambitious, but doable if every thing worked out as visualized. I may point out that plans are made to get into the war or react to war started by the enemy; once in the war you may have to make necessary changes as the war develops. The important point is to pursue the goal. After receiving the war

plans Station Commander Sargodha, Group Captain Zafar Masud and I, as OC, 33 Fighter Wing, had allotted targets to each squadron for the first attack. Of course subsequently the Stations were to be tasked by Command Operations Centre at Rawalpindi, according to the emerging requirements of war. All the squadron commanders started training their pilots for the allotted targets. A lot of attention was paid to air combat training within the squadrons as well as intra-squadrons.

There was healthy competition between the squadrons in air combat that got aired at the bar in the Mess. The bar was a unique place where all single pilots (and often married ones) gathered in the evening to brag about their exploits during the day. It was an institution that was irreplaceable. If you were shot in the air combat, as corroborated by film taken during dogfight, you had to offer a drink to the winner even if he was a junior pilot. Therefore, it was very vital for the squadron commanders and senior pilots to guard their tails at all times to protect their reputations. It is true that at times a junior pilot would win the fight but that was part of the game everyone understood the vagaries of air combat. The seniors had to win at least eight out of ten times to maintain their respect as fighter pilots and leaders of the pack of warriors.

On 29th August 1965 the PAF was put on the highest state of alert. It meant the PAF was to be made ready for war. All aircraft were to be dispersed and camouflaged, ack-ack was deployed on all vital points, ground defence personnel were deployed and other necessary measures were taken as required by the war plan. In fact, the PAF was all geared up to face the challenge. Air Commodore Aziz Ahmed, who was in charge of the India desk at the Inter-Services Intelligence Directorate (ISI), sent a forewarning signal on 30th August to all concerned, that an Indian attack outside Kashmir was imminent and also

conveyed all Indian Army moves to support the warning. After receiving the signal President Ayub Khan held a top-level conference the same day to discuss the significance of the message. Mr. Aziz Ahmed the Foreign Secretary scoffed at the message and his stance was also supported by some of the Army's top brass. This was the classic case of tunnel vision of the higher echelons of army and civilian leadership. What a pity! Only Air Marshal Nur Khan did not agree with the popular viewpoint and came back absolutely convinced of the imminent outbreak of total war. On 31st August 1965, the C-in-C PAF along with his Principal Staff Officers moved to Air Operations Headquarters, for the control of PAF operations. He issued an order on 1st September 1965 to the PAF to assume full alert. Soon after the Rann of Kutch agreement, in July 1965, a major portion of Pak Army troops were withdrawn to rear areas. In the crucial Lahore sector, mines were also removed and defensive positions dismantled; leave schedule was resumed, thereby reducing the effective strength to about 70 percent. However, due to heightened tension and local clashes in Kashmir some measure of readiness was enforced in the border areas. It was, however, not enough in case the dangerous move started by Pak Army in Akhnur sector spilled over into another dimension, turning into a full scale Indo-Pak War. The Foreign Office and a few army Generals stuck to their position till the start of war – that India will keep the war localized to Kashmir and will not cross the international border. It is not understood how could the Foreign Minister and Foreign Secretary, regardless of how intelligent they were, influence our highly experienced senior Army officers to accept their pedantic and illogical analysis. Our top brass should have understood that if you catch someone's throat and choke him, he is going to hit you on the body wherever it hurts the most; that is what the Indian Army did. Had

it not been for bravery of a few officers and jawans guarding the front and extensive air support by the PAF, we would have paid a very high price. The PAF however took the remaining measures required for being on full alert, such as activating all satellite airfields, providing them with night landing and other facilities. The activation of these bases was part of a dispersal plan and increasing operational effectiveness of the PAF. The training units were closed down and manpower distributed. The pilots in training institutions who had been kept current on operational aircraft were absorbed by the operational squadrons. In fact all measures required by the War Plans were completed in the time scale stipulated in them. Sensing the mood of Indians and our likely response I addressed all fighter pilots of the base on 31st August 1965. I said that there was clear evidence that India would throw its air force into the conflict. I further said that our government did not want escalation and therefore, desired to keep the PAF out of the war as far as possible. I also told them that we were presently cleared to shoot down the enemy aircraft only inside Pakistan but this could change if things heated up for our ground forces.

On 31st August 1965, a comparative tally of the combat aircraft in the inventories of the adversaries was: - PAF: fighters 104, bombers 26, and total combat aircraft 130. IAF: fighters 476, IAF bombers 60; total combat aircraft 536.

PAF Response – 1st September 1965

On 1st September 1965 Squadron Leader Sarfaraz Rafiqui, OC No 5 Squadron and Flight Lieutenant Imtiaz Bhatti of No 15 Squadron were on air defence alert duty since early in the morning. I, alongwith another pilot as my No 2, was to relieve them at 1230 hours. When I reached the ADA (Air Defence

Alert) bunker, Bhatti and Rafiqui requested me to let them continue the alert duty so that they could fly at least a sortie. I agreed to their request. They had to wait until about 1700 hours when they were scrambled by the SOC (Sector Operations Centre), and vectored to Chamb Sector where our army was under attack by the IAF aircraft. On reaching the Chamb area Bhatti spotted two Vampires below at about 3-4,000 feet in the combat area and informed the leader who also established contact. They went into the attack mode, one attacking and other giving cover to keep the attacker's tail clear. During the attack Rafiqui shot down two Vampires. Whilst giving cover to Rafiqui, Bhatti spotted another two Vampires and informed his leader. Rafiqui told him to go for them while he assumed the wingman's position to give cover to Bhatti. In the attack Bhatti shot down one and damaged the other who staggered home hugging the trees, to tell the tale. Brigadier Amjad Ali Khan Chaudhry Commander Artillery of 4 Corps sent a letter to the C-in-C PAF from front: "your very first action in Chamb left no doubt in our minds that we did not have to worry much about the enemy in the air. The pattern was set there and then. We will never forget that spectacle – it lifted our spirits and gave us a flying start." Brigadier Amjad Ali Khan Chaudhry also confirms shooting down of three IAF aircraft in his book 'September 65 – Before and After'. As a consequence of loss in combat, the IAF relegated 80 Vampire and 50 Ouragan aircraft to reserve category reducing the front line strength of IAF aircraft, by about 30% - a great contribution by Rafiqui and Bhatti. It is interesting to note when Rafiqui was over Chamb, Air Marshal Nur Khan was also there on a reconnaissance mission in a T-37 trainer aircraft. SOC was worried that Rafiqui or Bhatti may possibly shoot down the Air Chief. Such wayward exploits had been specialties of our Air Chief! When Rafiqui and Bhatti landed

back they were personally congratulated by the C-in-C for setting a good example for other pilots and giving the PAF a thundering start. The Air Chief had diverted to Sargodha after his reconnaissance mission in the combat area to greet the heroes. The Indian pilots who lost their lives in this encounter were Flight Lieutenants A K Bhagwagar, V M Joshi, and S Bharadwaj while Flying Officer Sondhi was able to nurse back his damaged aircraft.

2nd September

On 2nd September, 36 F-86 and 6 F-104 sorties were flown for Combat Air Patrol (CAP) in Jhelum-Muzaffarabad area and for close support to our army. However, no contact could be established during CAP missions although our radars did pick up a few enemy aircraft tracks but those faded out before our pilots could be positioned for an engagement. Squadron Leader M M Alam of No 11 Squadron was tasked to destroy enemy gun positions and troop concentrations in the vicinity of Jaurian, a strong holding position of the enemy. At 0530 hours, Alam took off leading a formation of 4 F-86s loaded with rockets and guns and headed for Jaurian. They were followed after a gap of five minutes by Flight Lieutenant Yousaf Ali Khan with a flight of 3 F-86s; one was left behind because of unserviceability during start-up. When Alam's flight reached the combat area they pulled up but they were dismayed when they did not find any signs of enemy activity. Alam hated to return back with loaded weapons. After a while he had a hunch that the enemy may be hiding in an orchard nearby. He decided to launch an attack on the orchard with all the rockets they had (each aircraft was carrying 28 rockets). His intuition paid off, as the enemy broke out of cover and started running helter-skelter. Alam and his

pilots then had a field day with their guns on the vehicles that emerged. Flight Lieutenant Yousaf after searching fruitlessly in the designated area spotted a long convoy of tanks and vehicles on road to Jaurian. After first attack with rockets the tanks went off the road to take cover. The formation made two more attacks and results were rewarding. Five tanks and a tank carrier were destroyed or put out of action and about 30 to 40 vehicles that were hiding in the grove were attacked with guns; it was estimated that 20 to 30 were also destroyed. A photograph taken by RT- 33 escorted by two F-86s revealed a rest house in the grove, which was perhaps the headquarter of the field formation. It was a rewarding day for pilots of Sargodha and for our army division in the battle area. It became apparent that burden of providing CAPs over the battle area and close support missions to the army formations would be on Sargodha Station and therefore it would require additional pilots and aircraft. Consequently 10 F-86s with pilots were flown in from PAF Station Mauripur led by Squadron Leader Wiqar Azim.

3rd September

Squadron Leader Alauddin Ahmed, OC of No 18 Squadron, joined the contingents led by Wing Commander M Sikander, OC of No 32 Wing and formed the 'strike wing' at Sargodha thus sharing the burden of ground missions with No 33 Wing. That was a welcome addition as we needed sufficient aircraft for counter air operations (attack on enemy air fields and radar stations) in case full scale war broke out (as concluded by the PAF but not supported by the Army and the Foreign Office till that time). It was conveyed to PAF on 2nd September that the Pak 7 Division had encountered delays in crossing the Tawi River. Therefore, the ground forces would need air cover in case

IAF decides to attack them during crossing the river. They emphasized that lack of air cover during that time would be disastrous for the forces on the move. Consequently, this task was given to Peshawar and Mauripur's Sargodha based-detachment and were put on 30 minutes alert. On 3rd September, Combat Air Patrols in the combat area were started by Flight Lieutenant Yousaf and his No 2 in F-86s and Flying Officer Abbas Mirza in a F-104 from Sargodha, starting at 0530 hours. They were tasked to block any interference by the IAF in the land battle. Some concentration of troops and vehicles and a dozen tanks were also reported by recce aircraft couple of miles from Akhnur. Srinagar airfield was also to be monitored as this airfield was most suitable for launching low level attacks in the battle area. The earlier assessment by PAF of enemy aircraft interfering in combat area was correct. Sakesar radar picked up 4 enemy tracks at 36,000 feet over the battle area. As the two F-86s were vectored to engage the bandits, the enemy aircraft split in two formations, one headed towards Pathankot perhaps a move to lure away the F-104 from giving top cover to F-86s. The F-104 was sent after them but they disappeared from the radar. The F-86s engaged the other pair but No 2 was unable to jettison his drop tanks thus putting him and his leader at disadvantage. Yousaf instructed his No 2, Flying Officer Abdul Khaliq, to leave the area and head for home. He had not gone very far when Khaliq decided to rejoin Yousaf as he realized that his leader was in a dangerous situation fighting alone in the midst of many enemy aircraft. Flight Lieutenant Yousaf spotted the enemy and when he was in a position to fire, the second enemy aircraft hit him, damaging his aircraft. He fired one missile accidentally and broke into a defensive manoeuvre. In the mean time Yousaf also regained contact with his No 2 who was about to be attacked by a Gnat. He called No 2 for a hard break and frustrated the enemy

attack. During that time the F-104, having established contact with the contestants, made two high speed passes, frightening the enemy who prudently opted to withdraw from the battle. Yousaf with a damaged aircraft, alongwith his No 2, landed back safely. Since Flying Officer Abbas Mirza in the F-104 was running low on fuel, Flight Lieutenant Hakimullah was scrambled in a F-104 to replace him and was vectored to Pasrur. After a few minutes the F-104 pilot reported an IAF Gnat landing at Pasrur; he kept orbiting over Pasrur till the army captured the pilot Squadron Leader Brij Pal Singh of the IAF. The aircraft was flown to Sargodha by Flight Lieutenant Sa'ad Hatmi who had flown Gnats while on deputation to RAF in UK. The Gnat lies in the PAF Museum at Faisal (former Drigh Road) Base. The PAF was able to save about 100 Pak Army vehicles and tanks while crossing the Tawi River. This was also observed by Major General Yahya Khan and a staff officer of 7 Division. Yahya's comments were: "had the PAF not stopped the IAF from interfering in the battle area it would have been a disaster for the 7 Division." Squadron Leader of IAF was awarded Vir Chakra for merely damaging Yusuf's aircraft; the big loser was Squadron Leader Brij Pal Singh who opted to land at Pasrur landing strip when he saw an F-104 orbiting around him. I also flew an air defence mission but no enemy tracks were painted on the radar during that time. The Air Chief visited Sargodha and discussed air tactics with the Station Commander and senior pilots and it was decided to launch 4 F-86s instead of a pair and also a pair of F-104s instead of a singleton, while carrying out CAP missions. This was necessitated in response to the IAF, which was launching flights of 4 aircraft and more. The Air Chief also discussed relative performance of Sabre and IAF aircraft. Our pilots who had flown Gnats and Hunters while flying with RAF assured the Air Chief that those two types of

aircraft had a slight edge in speed and rate of climb but our F-86s were far better in combat because the turning radius of our aircraft was smaller, thus they could outmanoeuvre them in dog-fights. Their Mig-21s were no match for F-104s; besides the IAF pilots had not yet developed enough skill in operating those aircraft. It was also pointed out to the Air Chief that GAR-8 missiles carried by some of our aircraft, and the presence of F-104s in the battle area were a factor due to which IAF pilots were avoiding air combat. The Air Chief went away greatly assured of the confidence and exuberance of his air warriors. During the afternoon, the Indians thrice made attempts to raid our ground forces but all their attempts were checkmated by 2 F-86s and a F-104; there was no other air engagement on this day. The ISI was convinced of an imminent attack on the international border and therefore the ISI Director, Brigadier Riaz Hussain personally apprised the Army C-in-C of imminent danger. Though cognizant of the danger at that stage, the C-in-C issued a mild warning to Army formations. On 4th September; the flash signal sent by GHQ was: "take all measures necessary in view of the prevailing critical situation." This order was rather a precautionary one and not an order to move to war locations.

4th September

On this day 23 F-86 sorties and 14 F-104 sorties were flown as CAP. Although a few enemy tracks were picked up for a short duration, but not enough to carry out interceptions. However, in one of the missions, while 4 F-86s were returning after a ground support operation, the No 2 Flying Officer Nasir M Butt, trailed behind the formation by about 2,000 feet. The reason was that his aircraft was hit by friendly ground fire, while returning after the attack on enemy positions, and therefore he was unable to keep up

with the formation. Since he was close to the border he ejected safely in Pakistani territory. He was the first casualty of war. However, an Indian account published after the war gives credit to Flight Lieutenant Virendra Singh Pathania, a Gnat pilot, for shooting down an F-86 aircraft on the same date, time and area. During this raid Mig-21s were also reported for the fist time. Due to their short range it was assumed that these may be operating from Pathankot. In the afternoon Squadron Leader M Arshad, OC of No 15 squadron was detailed for ground strike mission of targets in the battle area with 4 F-86 aircraft. Three more formations of 4 F-86s each were also sent in the area with 5 minutes interval and 2 F-104s were sent to give them top cover. The formations encountered no air opposition but saw a large Indian convoy heading towards Akhnur. They attacked the convoy destroying about 26 vehicles and Squadron Leader Arshad hit one truck carrying fuel and ammunition that blew up; the smoke and fire was a great help for the next formation heading towards that area. While the third formation led by enthusiastic and over-zealous pilot Squadron Leader Munir Ahmed was locating worthwhile targets, he attracted a barrage of ack-ack guns around Akhnur Bridge. He was able to deliver a profitable attack on field HQ south of Jammu. During this attack MiG-21s made their appearance but did not venture to attack F-86s. I also flew a CAP mission but without any luck in engaging enemy aircraft.

Mr U Thant, UN Secretary General made frantic appeals to both antagonists for cease fire; also a unanimous resolution was adopted by non-permanent members on 4th September for immediate cease fire but it went unheeded by India because she was in advanced stage of launching attack across the international border for a total war. In accordance with the government policy, Pakistan had not yet violated Indian air space. As against this, India had been enjoying the advantage of choosing her own time

and place of air engagements. The Pakistan Air Force had been exercising great restraint by not taking advantage of its right of pursuit of the raiders into Indian territory. In all our combats so far, PAF pilots were outnumbered two to three times. Yet we had not done badly, shooting up 4 Vampires and forcing down a Gnat intact. It was clear that superiority in numbers did not decide the outcome of air battles; in fact, better training, morale and above all fighting spirit, are the deciding factors.

5th September

This was a great day for our army because the Indian stronghold 'Jaurian', a vital position, was captured by the Pak Army after a tough fight as the enemy was well entrenched in strong bunkers. The PAF played an important part towards the success of this important milestone to Akhnur. Our army moved forward till they were face to face with strong defences of Akhnur. Our army was able to capture a large cache of arms and ammunition and equipment left behind by the enemy; also large numbers of POW were captured. One significant air to ground operation was visual reconnaissance over the battle area by Squadron Leader M M Alam and Flight Lieutenant Jilani. While strafing enemy with guns, which were retarding our army's advance, Alam's aircraft was hit by ground fire, shattering his canopy. Disregarding damage to his aircraft he pressed on attacks till his (and his No 2's) ammunition was delivered to the last bullet. A total of 12 F-86s and one F-104 sorties were flown from Sargodha on that day. I also flew in one of the missions. The IAF did not put up any significant showing on this day and from hindsight one can surmise that they were gearing up for big show for the following day. I also flew two CAP missions on this day.

6
All-Out War

"Wars may be fought with weapons, but they are won by men. It is the spirit of the men who follow and of the man who leads that gains the victory." *General George S Patton*

Beginning of War

On 6th September 1965, the air and ground wars, which were heretofore limited to ground and air action in disputed territory in Kashmir, turned into an all out war; when Indians launched full scale attacks on Pakistan's international border at 0300 hours. Their aim was to give a knockout blow to Pakistan and settle the Kashmir problem once and for all. Their first objective was to capture Lahore, to give a psychological blow to Pakistanis and their armed forces. The Indian Army Generals had given highfalutin promise to the nation that they will capture Lahore by evening and celebrate the occasion in the famous Lahore Gymkhana with whisky! At 0300 hours in the morning, a two pronged surprise attack was launched to capture Lahore. The 15 Indian Infantry Division and No 50 Para Brigade together with a tank regiment launched the attack on Atari-Wagah-Lahore axis. The second attack was along Barki-Lahore axis. This force

was composed of No 7 Indian Infantry Division along with a regiment of tanks. By about 0600 hours the Indians were three miles inside our border and only 8 miles from outskirts of Lahore. Subsequent to reluctantly accepted truce agreement after Rann of Kutch operation by Indians, the most vital mines had been removed; defensive positions were dismantled and positions were inadequately manned by the Pak Army in the Lahore sector. The Indian Army therefore had a free run up to the bank of BRB canal. At that stage the only obstacle was the BRB Canal to achieve their objective. They were ecstatic with their success so far. The kind of forces they had mustered for this operation gave them confidence to capture Lahore by evening i.e. on D-day. On D-day+1, they had planned to link up with the second prong which was to advance from the direction of Kasur. However plans, no matter how good they may be, never work out as conceived by the planners because it is impossible to assess the response from the opponent. Since it was a total surprise by the enemy the brunt of the attack was initially absorbed by the Rangers deployed along Lahore border. When it became clear to Pak Army, that it was not only a border skirmish, but an all out war, it struggled to meet the onslaught by hastily organizing defensive positions. The officers and jawans, together with the PAF vowed: 'thus far and no more'. The way the Indian attacks were fought off, by our heavily outnumbered forces, without any rest, speaks volumes of tenacity, courage, gallantry and determination of few who were manning the positions on the fateful days. Their contribution to the safety of our Fatherland will always be remembered and admired by our future generations. Coincidently the Indian advance was reported by a detachment of Mobile Observation Units (MOUs) of the PAF deployed along the border for reporting intruding aircraft. Since this unit was not equipped to fight tanks, the NCO in-

charge ordered a withdrawal, and reported the incident to Station Commander at Lahore. Without realizing that it was a full scale war the unit was sent back to their post; but the Station Commander informed the C-in-C Air Marshal Nur Khan. The Air Chief informed President Ayub Khan who said: 'this means war.' Soon after the President's declaration of being in a state of war with India, Air Marshal Nur Khan issued an order of the day to the Pakistan Air Force:

"Since 1st September, when the PAF was called upon into action against the IAF in Kashmir; we have carried out all our operational commitment in a highly successful manner. This has been possible because of the magnificent way everyone in the PAF reacted to the emergency. We are now faced with a total war and are required to perform our supreme task. I am confident that we will prove equal to the challenge and all airmen and officers, particularly the aircrew, will discharge their responsibilities with even greater devotion, dedication and determination ensuring our ultimate victory. I wish you all success and good hunting."

Having launched a war on Pakistan on international border we were ready for their full scale attack by the IAF on our airfields and installations. We were at instant readiness, meaning to be airborne in two minutes. The Combat Air Patrols were up in the air before dawn.

Why the Indians did not launch attacks on our airfields is a mystery best known to the Indian High Command. However one can hazard a guess that they may have decided to concentrate on giving full support to the Army hoping for a quick breakthrough in the land battle or hoping to let the air war remain limited to border areas where they would have numerical advantage. The commander of such a large Air Force, in my opinion, should have overwhelmed the PAF to the extent preventing it from

giving any meaningful support to the Army thus achieving the desired breakthrough in Lahore sector. While keeping a thorough vigil on the activities of the IAF moves, the PAF was able to mount CAPs on the battle fronts to keep the IAF away from giving meaningful support to its army. The PAF also gave a lot of ground support to our army under pressure emanating from enemy's surprise attack. The Indian Army had reached near Batapur Bridge which our army was desperately trying to destroy to check the advance of the enemy. During that time 6 F-86s from Peshawar led by Sajad Haider appeared overhead to support 10 Division entrusted with the defence of Lahore. They went into action straight away. This is what is recorded in the diary of 10 Division: "at this crucial juncture appeared 6 PAF Sabre jets and for 15 to 20 minutes wrought havoc on enemy armour and infantry who were advancing in the open trying to cross the canal." They carried out 5 to 6 attacks in about 20 minutes, longer time than they should have stayed in the battle area, and therefore had to land at Sargodha for refuelling. They were refuelled and rearmed for the next mission. During that mission they destroyed, according to Sajad Haider's estimate, about a dozen tanks and 20 vehicles. In fact they played merry hell with the Indian formation as if they were on a practice range. To put a halt to Indian army's advances and to destroy as many lucrative targets in the battle field, Sargodha launched many sorties of CAPs over battle area and for close support to our army; the last sortie landed back at 1545 hours.

Crucial Decision

The war plan issued in June 1965 stipulated clearly that PAF being small in size compared to IAF will take the initiative of a surprise attack on enemy's forward air fields and radar stations.

The plan was to launch attacks from Sargodha, Peshawar and Mauripur as given below:

Base, aircraft	Target
Sargodha, 8 F-86s	Adampur
Sargodha, 8 F-86s	Halwara
Sargodha, 4 T-33s	Ferozepur Radar
Sargodha, 6 F-86s +1 Elint	Amritsar Radar
Peshawar, 8 F-86s	Pathankot
Peshawar, 2 B-57s	Adampur
Peshawar, 2 B-57s	Halwara
Peshawar, 2 B-57s	Pathankot
Mauripur, 8 F-86s	Jamnagar
Mauripur, 4 T-33s	Porbunder Radar
Mauripur, 6 B- 57s	Jamnagar

In addition, Harvard aircraft from Risalpur were moved to Risalewala to carryout road interdiction soon after the fall. The time on target for the first airfield strike mission was 1705 hours for fighter bombers and B-57s were to launch after dark.'It was also planned to air drop Special Services Group (Commandos) at midnight on important enémy air bases.

Priority Operations - In Support of Army

On 6th September our Air Chief's top most priority was to give maximum support to our Army, in order to stop the advance of the Indian army at all cost, otherwise it would have been impossible to stop them if they had managed to burst through our lightly held defensive positions. He knew the gravity of the situation and therefore went all out to support the army at that critical juncture. Since this unplanned load of air effort was

beyond the resources of Sargodha, therefore Mauripur was ordered to move 12 F-86s plus 6 T-33s to Sargodha to augment the force. Unfortunately Mauripur aircraft were delayed because they did not receive the orders to move until about 1250 hours and C-130 supporting the move was not scheduled in time to transport ground crew and equipment due to a communication gap. The urgently required aircraft eventually reached Sargodha very late. The refuelling process was completed by about 1630 hours that made them late for a TOT of 1705 hours; besides 4 aircraft had developed major defects and needed extensive work to make them airworthy. The concept of launching a first strike with a surprise, especially for a smaller force, is, in fact, a very logical step to narrow the disparity in numbers. But adequate force is needed to undertake such missions. The enemy was expected to be on high alert and attackers would have to fight their way through to the target or fight an air battle on enemy's home territory. Since PAF had been engaged in supporting our army in Akhnur area from I September to 5 September, and extremely busy throughout the day on 6 September to support the Pak army's efforts in blocking the advance of Indian army on two crucial fronts, it was therefore running short of adequate numbers of serviceable aircraft at Sargodha. The 12 F-86s from Mauripur were moved to Sargodha to augment the force level but disappointingly the aircraft arrived too late to be made ready for TOT of 1705 hours; and therefore were not available to augment the numbers of aircraft for the first strike force. It was about 1600 hours that the last F86 landed back at the base after a close support mission. At that time it became obvious that required numbers of aircraft would not be available for the strike mission. At about 1615 hours, Station Commander Sargodha approached C-in-C at Command Headquarters to inform him that 12 aircraft would be available for three targets (Adampur, Halwara and Amritsar Radar) instead of 24 planned for the first

strike mission. He therefore suggested that airfield strike missions be postponed for 24 hours; he further told him that since there was no IAF activity that day it would give the base time to recover more unserviceable aircraft. Besides, he apprised him that all Sargodha pilots who were earmarked for these missions already had a full day of flying and they were the ones who had practically planned and rehearsed the strikes on targets allotted to them. The reason put up by the Station Commander for postponement of strike mission was carefully considered by the Air Chief but he did not agree to postpone the strike because the Air Chief and his senior staff did not want to leave the initiative of launching of first strike to the IAF. An additional factor, though inconsequential, because it could also be postponed, was that Peshawar based aircraft were ready to launch the strike mission. Sargodha was therefore being pressed to launch strikes with half the aircraft required for the missions. Sargodha tried very hard to produce as many aircraft as possible but with all the effort put in by the engineers they could only produce 8 serviceable aircraft. The Station Commander again approached the Air Chief to modify the plan to send all aircraft to either Adampur or Halwara. The Air Chief did not agree to a very rational suggestion of changing the plan to send all 8 aircraft against one airfield. Imagine what havoc in the air or on the ground Rafiqui, Alam, Alauddin Ahmad, Cecil Choudhry, Yunus and Hatmi, all well accomplished fighters pilots, would have caused had all been ordered to attack one target and not two.

I have earlier made the point that plans are made for all conceivable scenarios to take commanders to battles and from then on plans are changed according to unfolding situations. The plans are not sacrosanct that these cannot be changed if the situation so demands. It is the commander on the spot who is the best person to suggest or decide on course of action dictated by

the unfolding situation unless the course of action contemplated by the High Command is so vital that not carrying it out will result in extreme catastrophe. However, in this scenario, logically sound advice of the Station Commander was not accepted by the Air Chief, who had the support of his senior operations staff. In the air battles, numbers make a lot of difference, especially, when the aircraft are equally matched in performance, and expertise of pilots is comparable. The larger numbers in a particular battle create their own quality. To carry out counter air operations (which includes attacks on airfields) or on VPs heavily defended with aircraft, the optimum number is a minimum of 8 aircraft sent to a target, so that 4 carry out attacks and 4 give them top cover; and if they are intercepted before the attack, 8 is a good number to fight out an air battle.

Pathankot Strike

Peshawar was allowed to launch the strike force to Pathankot as per original Time on Target (TOT) given in the plan, whereas the situation demanded revision of TOT, considering the delay at Sargodha. By allowing Peshawar to proceed ahead of Sargodha aircraft would certainly place the Sargodha force in an extremely vulnerable position. Alerted by the attack at Pathankot, IAF would definitely declare 'red alert' and would surely scramble a large number of aircraft to defend their airfields at Adampur and Halwara. In addition, ill-advised decision to send visual recce sorties by two F-104s over Adampur and Halwara earlier in the afternoon was sure to have given away PAF's intentions. Perhaps for some unknown reason, the F-104s were not allowed to attack even though they found almost all aircraft lined up on the tarmac; these aircraft would have brought havoc to the IAF on the ground. Later, not allowing all 8 aircraft to strike one target was yet

another less-than-wise decision. The command decision however was to launch against the two airfields. The Pathankot strike consisting of 8 F-86s was led by Sajad Haider and additional 2 F-86s with missiles led by Wg Cdr M G Tawab were to provide top cover. Since there was no opposition except for light ack-ack, the pilots had a field day. They carried out 2 attacks each, taking longer time than the fuel allowed, and therefore had to divert to Sargodha for refuelling. Wg Cdr Tawab, while giving top cover, counted 14 fires burning on airfield. Only one aircraft of this mission was hit by ground fire but got away with minor damage in the lower fuselage and wing. After mission debrief, the Pathankot strike pilots were credited with 7 Migs-21s, 5 Mysteres and one Fairchild C-119. The Director of Operations and Plans thought claims of Mig-21s were rather optimistic while Indians claimed that there were no Mig-21s but Mysteres at Pathankot. The IAF Official History of 1965 War states that only 9 Mig-21s were in service at that time, and India was prepared to show 8 aircraft at the end of campaign; also, they acknowledge 10 aircraft destroyed and 3 damaged, during Pathankot raid. For a successful mission I offer my congratulations to Sajad Haider and his pilots for a job well done.

Adampur Strike

At Sargodha 8 F-86s – 4 for Adampur and 4 for Halwara were started up. They were about 20 minutes behind time for TOT and unluckily one aircraft from each formation had to abort due to unserviceable condition which meant only 3 aircraft per flight would carry out the strike mission. The Sargodha Station Commander once again pleaded through ACAS (Ops) to send all 6 aircraft to one target. The command decision however was: 'irrespective of numbers,' the two strikes must be launched. As

Squadron Leader Alam crossed the border for Adampur dusk was approaching fast. When he crossed into India just short of Tarn Taran, (his Initial Point for setting course) he was warned by SOC Sakesar that the IAF had large numbers of Hunters prowling around the area protecting Adampur and Halwara. A few seconds short of IP, Alam saw 4 hunters 500 ft above crossing at 90 degrees in close attack formation. Alam was quick to decide to attack the prowlers and ordered his section to punch drop tanks, the Indians also got rid of their drop tanks. The air battle started off with 7 aircraft in individual battles. Squadron Leader Alam, the leader recalled the encounter as follows: "I remember thinking what very pretty aircraft these very new Hunters were and we turned into each for combat. The fight didn't last long. I got my sights on the No 4 Hunter, after a brief burst, he flicked and went into the ground in a great ball of flame, although I am not certain whether I hit him or not. We were now evenly matched, numerically, although I never fought at such low altitudes again, nor often at such speeds." The Indian critics have jumped upon Alam's words "I am not certain whether I hit him or not." However as an explanation I can say – either Alam registered hits on the aircraft, or any one of the two other pilots had hit him. The Indian Air Force can only verify the legitimacy of the claim! They were now evenly matched, that is 3 against 3. In this melee Squadron Leader Alauddin Ahmad and Flight Lieutenant Hatmi each claimed one aircraft damaged. The fight was called off by Alam due to long stay in the area, ordering his pilots to return to base. While on the way back another Hunter returning home, was attacked by Alam and he thinks he registered hits on it. According to him "I saw smoke coming out but no flames." It was in fact Squadron Leader Rawlley returning back after the mission when during the engagement Alam fired from astern and Rawlley hit the ground

near Tarn Taran. In this mission Alam claimed 2 Hunters and Squadron Leader Alauddin Ahmed and Flight Lieutenant Saad Hatmi both claimed one aircraft damaged. All three pilots landed back safely. The Indian History of Indo-Pak War, 1965 says - "6th September, one Hunter, Ajeet Kumar Rawlley, No 7 Squadron, killed in action near Tarn Taran." Although our aircraft had been prevented from reaching their target ie, Adampur the PAF could rightly feel satisfied with outcome of the mission.

Halwara Strike

The strike to Halwara was led by Squadron Leader Sarfaraz Ahmed Rafiqui with Flight Lieutenants Yunus Hussain as No 2 and Cecil Choudhry as No 3. Unfortunately the fourth pilot dropped out after encountering an unserviceablity after start up. The Halwara strike was late and got airborne when day light was fading. The flight actually crossed the international border on its way out when the flight for Adampur was returning from its abortive mission. In fact they made visual contact with each other at low level and Alauddin warned the outgoing Sabres to keep a good look out for lots of Hunters around the area. It was a general call but it was understood and appreciated by Rafiqui and his team. No doubt it is was a foregone conclusion that they will receive a hot reception. The visibility in the area became so poor that features on the ground could not be identified even at 1,500 ft whereas launching of attack was planned from 3,500 ft. That evening the IAF had two pairs airborne for guarding Halwara for possible intruders even though it was late for fighter bomber attacks. One flight of two was flown by Flying Officers Pingale and Ghandi while the other pair was that of Flight Lieutenant Rathore and Flying Officer Neb. Pingale and Ghandi

were in a left hand orbit over the airfield while the other two in a right hand orbit. Rafiqui zeroed in on the nearest aircraft (that was Pingale). When within the firing range, Rafiqui delivered the attack with his guns and shot down Pingale who was totally surprised at what had happened to him; he lost control of his aircraft and ejected safely. Thereafter, Rafiqui skilfully manoeuvred behind Ghandhi and fired at him, registering some hits but unfortunately, his guns jammed. He told his No 2, Cecil Choudhry, to take the lead, as he slid back to the wingman's position. Ghandi took advantage of this slack and positioned himself behind Rafiqui and fired but he missed because of erratic aim. While Ghandi was chasing Rafiqui, Cecil slipped behind him and hit him on the left wing; his aircraft out of control, Ghandi ejected near the airfield. At this stage Rafiqui deemed it prudent to disengage and head for home. He gathered his formation and set course northwest but two unobserved Hunters were following behind them. Being on the home ground Rathore and Neb continued the chase. Rathore manoeuvred behind Rafiqui and fired at him, registering some hits. Closing in further, he delivered another volley which was fatal for Rafiqui. His aircraft banked sharply to the left then drove into the ground near Heren village about 6 miles from Halwara. At this time Cecil saw an aircraft behind Yunus and gave him call for defensive break. Yunus carried out the break but for inexplicable reasons he pulled upwards thus assisting Neb to close in on him. Neb got a golden opportunity to deliver a well-aimed burst that landed on Yunus' aircraft that disintegrated in mid-air, killing him in the process. Cecil being left alone, made a dash for home after an unforgettable and nerve-wrecking end of the day. The IAF post war claims of shooting down 4 Sabre aircraft without loss, is untrue because it was only a flight of 3 aircraft that was sent to Halwara.

In the final assessment of PAF air strikes on the airfields, 3 Hunters were destroyed in the air, and three or four damaged for the loss of two F-86 along with their pilots Rafiqui and Yunus. It is strange on the other hand that IAF has admitted loss of no Hunters on 6th September. For his bold leadership Squadron Leader Sarfaraz Ahmad Rafiqui was awarded the coveted Hilal-i-Jurat in addition to Sitara-i-Jurat earned on 1st September when he shot down 2 Vampires at Akhnur. Flight Lieutenants Yunus Hussain and Cecil Choudhry were awarded a Sitara-i-Jurat each. Thus, concluded the story of attack on Halwara airfield. The IAF awarded Rathore, Neb and Ghandi with a Vir Chakra each for their kills. Though Ghandi claimed shooting down Rafiqui's Sabre but the Indian Official History Indo-Pak War 1965, does not credit him on grounds that the wreckage was nowhere in the vicinity of the airfield, as maintained by Ghandi.

Amritsar Radar Strike

Simultaneously with the attacks on Pathankot, Adampur and Halwara, the PAF had planned to eliminate the radar at Amritsar. It was extremely well camouflaged and therefore its exact location had to be ascertained prior to the strike mounted against it. The PAF had known the existence of the radar and had kept it under surveillance to learn about its capabilities. The location could only be predicted within 5 miles but that was not enough for a strike against a small and well-defended target. The radar at Amritsar was type P-35 of Russian origin and had both early warning and GCI (ground controlled interception) capabilities. Its overall performance was similar to the high powered radars of the PAF. Considering its capabilities, its destruction was of primary importance to the PAF. No 24 Squadron based at Peshawar was equipped with 2 RB-57Bs and 2 RB-57Fs Elint

(Electronic Intelligence) aircraft; of the latter only one was available as the other was in United States undergoing modifications. Their tasks included (a) assistance in low level homing on enemy radars (b) monitoring of enemy radars to locate their positions and report changes, if any, in their locations (c) monitoring and jamming of enemy radio channels, particularly those employed for GCI work.

The attempt to strike Amritsar Radar was made late in the evening. The plan was to have an RB-57 home on to the target site closely followed by 4 F-86s. It was not until 1740 hours that 4 F-86s from Sargodha led by myself, set out for the task. Our path finder was Squadron Leader Rashid in RB -57, who had managed to take off at the last minute due to aircraft rectification delays. When the formation reached Wazirabad, the aircraft's special equipment malfunctioned and the mission had to be abandoned. Luckily Squadron Leader Iqbal, who was airborne from Peshawar in the Elint aircraft, called for a rendezvous to make another effort to attack the target. I and Squadron Leader Muniruddin got airborne to join up with Iqbal. On the approach to Amritsar the RB-57 was struck by ack-ack firing and lost one of the engines over the target. The path finder mission was completed but due to darkness, we were reluctantly forced to abandon the search for the second time in the evening. Squadron Leader Iqbal nursed back his aircraft to Peshawar on one engine. However the High Command was determined to eliminate the vital Amritsar Radar regardless of the cost.

Other Radars and Airfields

As a part of initial strike plan T-33s armed jet trainers from Sargodha were launched to attack Ferozepur radar, while Mauripur's 8 F-86s were supposed to be launched against

Jamnagar airfield and 4 T-33s were to attack Porbunder Radar. Only two lightly armed T-33s could be spared for both radars and aircraft from Mauripur could not be spared and therefore strike did not materialize against Jamnagar. Jamnagar however was out of range for F-86s unless they carried 4 drop tanks each. It was therefore decided to attack the target by night with B-57s.

B-57s from Peshawar attacked all their targets at night with great fervour. The PAF bombers found their targets; delivering seven 1,000 bombs from shallow dives. All targets were heavily defended by anti aircraft artillery batteries The B-57 wing ended the night's operation successfully but lost one aircraft

As part of the airfield raids, special operations were also planned in which commandos were to be dropped near the three major airfields at night by C-130 aircraft. It was a daring, dangerous, ill-planned, ill-conceived and poorly executed operation. A lot of well trained and valuable lives were lost for no gain what so ever. It was, in fact, an utter disaster.

7th September – Trial of Strength

The PAF had scored a psychological advantage during air battles from 1st to 6th September 1965. It proved itself as an aggressive and determined force, notwithstanding its smaller numbers, and was ever-ready to take on the adversary in the air, three times its size. The PAF pilots were enthusiastically engaging them everywhere and gaining an upper hand. The IAF, having the initiative of starting the war, did not go into the battle with aggressive deportment at any time. They failed to strike the PAF where it may have hurt the most. This of course is a moot point. The launching of first strikes on adversary's airfields was not an easy decision to make, by either of the C-in-C's at that juncture. If I may hazard a guess, the IAF Chief did not want to come off

second best by launching the 1st strike on the well-guarded PAF airfield. On the other hand, the attrition factor may have loomed large in our chief's mind because he needed the force intact to support the hard-pressed army. The room on top is undoubtedly a very lonely place for the Chiefs. There is no doubt that the PAF had a lot of eggs in one basket at Sargodha, but the 'eggs' were fairly well-dispersed and being guarded with CAPs by F-86s and the much dreaded F-104, throughout the war. From 1st to 6th September, Pakistani pilots, air defence elements and other support services learnt important lessons which were assimilated by all, prior to the challenge on 7th September and hence, were looking forward to giving an appropriate response. Air defence was the lynch pin of the PAF's effectiveness and consequently, the security of Pakistan. We were hoping that our air defence system would not be overwhelmed by the enemy and PAF remained viable to support the ground war. It had been anticipated by our planners that Sargodha was going to be the most vital airfield during war against India; and this fact also became apparent during the previous week's operations. It goes to the credit of the High Command in anticipating this fact and therefore allotting adequate resources to make Sargodha as secure as possible. The most efficient utilization of scarce resources, to shape the base into a stronghold, as it was on 1st September 1965, speaks volumes about the Air Defence Commanders as well as the Station Commanders, whose untiring efforts and foresight translated it into reality. The names of Group Captain Masroor Hosain, Group Captain Saeedullah Khan and Group Captain Zafar Masud will forever be remembered in the history books as people who proved more than equal to the task.

Everyone in the air defence machine was glued to his radar scope and MOUs on border were alert and vigilant to report any intruder into our air space. Squadron Leader Alam and 5 other

pilots were on alert duty in F-86s, all ready and strapped in their cockpits before dawn on the morning of 7th September 1965. Two F-104s were also ready to start, waiting at the end of runway, to hear the siren for scramble by the SOC.

Although aircraft were in the air at dawn on fighter patrol duties, and air defence system was on highest alert, however 6 Mysteres slipped through the net and pulled up for attack on Sargodha. They had approached from an easterly direction at tree top level, to deliver their attacks at 0530 hours. I must acknowledge that their approach to the target was perfect. I was standing outside the air defence alert bunker when they pulled up. Since they did not pull up high enough I assumed that they would not be able to inflict any worthwhile damage during their attack. Seeing their low height and trajectory I did not even bother to jump into the trench. They however, completely surprised the air defence system and their navigation to the target was as good as it could be. The whole air base was at their mercy. Had they pulled up high to acquire the targets – which were plenty – they would have done extensive damage at Sargodha. From the attack pattern I gathered that their hearts and souls were not in the mission they had been assigned to attack. Their aim was to reach Sargodha which they did, but delivery of weapons on targets was totally unprofessional. Some of them jettisoned their rocket pods; they sprayed bullets helter-skelter during their single high speed pass. They missed 6 shining F-86s on ORP due to sheer panic. They left Sargodha unscathed.

An Audacious Duel

When the 6 Mysteres exited a lone aircraft piloted by Squadron Leader Devayya came into attack Sargodha during intense ack-ack fire. After the attack he exited at low level. Squadron Leader Amjad flying an F-104 was vectored by SOC

Sakesar to chase the aircraft that exited south east. While chasing Amjad saw the straggler Mystere aircraft. Chasing at high speed Amjad got behind Devayya's low flying Mystere and fired a Sidewinder missile but it went straight into the ground. The first generation of heat seeking missiles had the drawback that these could not distinguish the difference between exhaust from jet and hot terrain. After continuing the chase he closed into gun-firing range and fired with his six-barrelled Vulcan revolving-cannon. Amjad recalls that as he opened the fire, the bullets did not land on the aircraft. Realizing that his pipper (aiming point) was a bit off target he adjusted his aim and fired again. The Mystere broke right passing through the stream of bullets. Amjad, certain of kill broke off to chase the others of the formation. During the chase he saw one aircraft was positioning behind him. To get behind the attacking aircraft Amjad pulled up for 'yo-yo' bouncing up to 7,000 ft and then to low level again. Amjad soon realized that he was up against a very resolute pilot who was unwilling to give up the duel. Amjad had to do another 'yo-yo' to prevent overshooting. The fight dragged on for some time with series of turns into each other, developing into classic 'scissors' manoeuvre. When behind the enemy but close, Amjad pressed the trigger longer than usual and flying at high speed with high rate of closure rammed into the adversary. Amjad's controls froze and he ejected; his parachute opened when his feet barely touched the ground. At Kot Nakka, a village 5 miles south of Pindi Bhattian, where village folks were starting their daily routine of working in the fields, they heard the roar of jets. Bashir Ahmed, who was then 37 years old, recalls two aircraft approaching from Sargodha and getting into a turning fight for several minutes. Then the rear aircraft started firing and collided with aircraft in front. He then saw the pilot of aircraft coming down by parachute. The other pilot did not eject and crashed across Jhang canal close to

Hinduana village and was killed. This fight was witnessed by many workers in the area and all confirmed the collision having taken place. People thought that the PAF pilot having run short of ammunition rammed into the enemy aircraft. No doubt Amjad got a royal treatment in village and the folklore survives to this day. He returned back to Sargodha by helicopter and he was back in action the same evening. Devayya had survived the first attack and his aircraft was in control. Undaunted he chose to fight even though he may not have had enough fuel to go back home.

John Fricker, in his book "Battle for Pakistan – The Air War of 1965," which was published in 1979, attributes destruction of F-104 to Squadron Leader Devayya. Fricker had for the most part hazarded a plausible guess. He did not carry out field research by interviewing ground witnesses. For many years this classic dogfight has mystified the historians and air enthusiasts alike. It was again researched thoroughly going through the records and field interviews by Air Commodore M Kaiser Tufail who has pieced together all facts in his book, "Great Battles of Pakistan Air Force", published in 2005 under the caption "Mystery of the Downed Mystere", the factual version, with his permission, is described above. The respective Air Forces cited both pilots for courage as well as shooting skills. Flight Lieutenant Amjad Hussain was awarded the Sitara-i-Jurat soon after the war; Squadron Leader A B Devayya was posthumously awarded the Maha Vir Chakra in April 1988 after passage of 23 years, when his case was reviewed by the IAF.

Making of an Ace

Immediately after IAF's day light attack, Squadron Leader Alam and his No 2 Flying Officer Masood Akhtar were scrambled with 2 other F86s and a F-104 for an airfield patrol at 15,000 ft.

Within 5 minutes they were vectored by the ground controller towards an incoming Indian raid from east of Sargodha, about 10 to 15 miles out. They were, however, asked to turn back to Sargodha as IAF Hunters were already overhead. It was then about 0610 hours. Squadron Leader Arif Iqbal in a F-104 and Flight Lieutenant Imtiaz Bhatti and his No 2 in F-86s were also directed towards the raiders but Alam smelling blood, beat them in the race reaching behind the raiders. Arif and Bhatti did not take part in the battle. In "The Story of Pakistan Air Force – A Saga of Courage and Honour published in 1988 - in heading 'Making of an Ace', page 380 has written the following account:

"Mohammad Mahmood Alam who appeared almost lost in the none-too-roomy cockpit of Sabre. Yet during 1965 conflict with India, this Pakistani Squadron Commander established a combat record which has few equals in the history of jet air warfare. Many pilots have scored several air victories in one sortie, and have equalled or exceeded Alam's claim of shooting down up to 5 enemy aircraft of superior performance within a few minutes. But few are likely to be able to match his record of destroying at least three opponents – Hunters of the Indian Air Force – within the space of somewhere around 30 to 40 seconds. Admittedly, conformation of Alam's claims had been difficult to obtain, despite close-range observations of his encounter by several PAF pilots, and some gun camera evidence. Nearest of these observers was his wingman, Flg Off Masood Akhtar, who protecting his leader's tail, clung like a leech throughout the action. Another section of the PAF Sabres, led by Flt Lt Bhatti, was attempting to engage the Hunters but Alam got there first. Flying top cover in an F-104 was Arif Iqbal who, with intense fascination and frustration watched the brief combat. On this basis Alam was originally credited with 5 IAF Hunters destroyed, although the wreckage of only two could be found in

Pakistani territory, within 2 or 3 miles of Sangla Hill railway station. The bodies of the pilots – one Hindu and one Sikh – were reportedly burnt beyond recognition. The area of main engagement however, some 30 miles east of Sargodha airfield, was only about 55 miles inside the Pakistani border – some seven or eight minutes at jet speed. Thus, only the Indian Air Force is in a position truthfully to verify some day, its actual losses on the second day of its war with Pakistan. The clear ascendancy established by the PAF pilots in this encounter – and those that would follow on that fateful day – was a powerful factor in heightening both morale and fighting spirit in Pakistan's outnumbered but resolute air arm."

According to India's Official History of Indo-Pak war, 1965 IAF lost three Hunters; the names of pilots are: Squadron Leader Onkar Nath Kacker of No 27 Squadron who became a POW; Squadron Leader Suresh B Bhagwat and Flying Officer Jagdev Singh Brar of No 7 Squadron were killed in action (KIA) near Sangla Hill.

There is a very interesting account of near successful escape of Squadron Leader Kacker from the clutches of Pakistanis. He had ejected near Burjlal village, which is located about 25 miles south east of Sargodha. Being a quick thinker, he got rid of the badges on his flying suit which could reveal his identity. When the villagers rushed towards him, he cleverly introduced himself as a PAF pilot. Kacker became an instant celebrity as the gullible villagers were enthralled at seeing a PAF pilot for the first time. After a very refreshing cup of tea he asked for a horse-back ride to get to the main road for catching a bus to his home base Sargodha. He nearly made it but for a sharp-eyed Imdad Hussain, who sensed his unease and his somewhat different demeanour. He decided to check the label on his flying suit, which read 'Made in India'; that gave away his identity. Kacker

was speechless in front of the villagers. Soon the local police reached the scene and Kacker was whisked away from the angry crowd. He spent the next five months as a POW.

Last Two Raids on Sargodha

The IAF put in two more half-hearted raids on this day. The third raid sneaked in low level between 0945 and 1000 hours, carried out a single attack. They were able to exit undetected for lack of pick up on the radar. They destroyed one F-86 on ORP and a wall of the abandoned ATC building with a rocket hit. The aircraft destroyed was going to be flown by Flight Lieutenant Anwar-ul-Haq Malik who was carrying out pre-flight checks, but for a brave and vigilant NCO, Senior Technician Rashid Ahmed, armament fitter, who dragged him away in the nick of time. The last raid of the IAF on Sargodha appeared at 1545 hours. About 15 minutes earlier, the outer MOUs had reported three jets north of Lahore heading west and this was confirmed by the inner belt. The SOC scrambled two F-86s for interception. They saw 2 Mysteres attacking Sargodha and positioned themselves at the estimated path of the exit point of enemy's aircraft; and soon were in pursuit of the 2 aircraft as they ducked down to make dash home. Malik was soon able to avenge the loss of his aircraft at ORP in an earlier enemy attack, with a well executed missile attack. The second aircraft was also chased and fired at with missile but he escaped. No appreciable damage was caused during this raid.

Due to the poor performance of the Indian mission leader during the first mission's attack phase, we were lucky not to have lost 6 F-86s lined up on ORP and two F-104s at the beginning of runway. That day, just by chance I saw a photo of US aircraft lined up on the ORP in Viet Nam in Time magazine.

They were protected by sand bag walls. I rushed to Station Commander to show him that protective arrangement. He was delighted to find the solution for shielding aircraft on ORP. Within a few hours the sand bag walls were put in place. He also informed the other Station Commanders to make similar arrangements. It is strange that such a simple solution was not ever thought of by any one of us in the PAF.

Tail Choppers in East Pakistan

No 14 Squadron based at Dacca in East Pakistan attacked Kalaikunda, forward Indian airbase in West Bengal. They had a very fruitful mission, destroying 4 Canberras and 4 Vampires and damaging several others according to losses accepted by IAF in the Official History of Indo-Pak War 1965. It was amazing and unmatched feet by any standards, executed by a small force that made the enemy unbalanced right at the start of war. The honours go to Wing Commander Shabbir Hussain the Officer Commanding of No 14 Squadron.

The Die is Cast

Although skirmishes fought over the battle area from 1st to 5th and two days of counter air operations (attacks on airfields and radars) on 6th and 7th were relatively small but they set the tone of far-reaching significance. In 48 hours ie, on 6th and 7th September the PAF destroyed at least 30 enemy aircraft on the ground and in the air. Against this, we lost only 7 aircraft during the two days. Though these successes may not be significant considering the overall strength and resources of the IAF but air wars are fought not on resources alone but by skill and determination to fight at all costs and against any odds. The

feeling in the PAF at that stage was that we had overcome the crisis of survival and the odds had been evened out. The most important aspect of the air war was the soaring of morale in the PAF. In my opinion there is no better weapon more lethal against the enemy than the morale of the force and the nation. This feeling was not restricted to PAF alone but permeated to the other two services and the nation as well. The President of Pakistan sent a message to Air Marshal Nur Khan, complimenting the PAF on its first two days of war operations:

"I am writing to congratulate you and ranks of the Air Force on the magnificent job that they have done in destroying so many enemy aircraft on the ground and in the air despite being heavily outnumbered Their deeds of valour have heartened the nation and justified its confidence in their ability to defend the country. Please convey my congratulations to all officers and men on this brilliant performance."

The events of 7th September established that the PAF had a viable air defence and could take a heavy toll of the enemy. It also established that the Sabre, flown by skilful and audacious pilots, was a match against any Indian aircraft that they could mount in the air. Notwithstanding the fact that the PAF had comparatively fewer aircraft, the stoppage of spares support at this critical juncture by America was a most unkind cut by an ally. It created a serious situation for us. This situation forced us to rethink our strategy. Faced with the uncertainty of duration of war and dwindling spares situation, we were forced to hold back our offensive stance to conserve our strength to remain an effective force in vital sector of air defence and support to the Army. Fortunately for us, the IAF stopped raids against our airfields during day time after 7th September. The IAF pilots were also reluctant to engage our pilots in aerial combats thereby leaving the battle area in virtual control of the PAF. This also

resulted in alleviating our apprehensions regarding the rate of attrition; otherwise losing a few aircraft a day could have been unbearable for us in a prolonged war. There is no doubt that had the IAF been resolute enough, the PAF would have been hard pressed over a longer period. On the other hand, had they repeated the 7th September style of operations, they would have suffered the same or even worse results. I think the IAF took the wise course of action by not challenging the PAF on their strong fortress. On the whole the IAF lost out in few days of war in the fields of strategy and morale and never seemed to have recovered during the war.

At this early stage a stalemate had set in because there were no worthwhile engagements except for a few skirmishes. The PAF was in a happy position that it had achieved control of the air over the land battle as well as about 20 miles inside the Indian territory. It could give close support unchallenged and mount CAPs over the battle area to deter the IAF giving any effective support to their Army. Having achieved a good measure of air superiority it became necessary for PAF to review its strategy to dovetail it with the Army's plans according to the prevailing situation. Since there was no political guidance on this aspect and there being no possibility of replenishment of lost aircraft, the PAF adopted a policy of conserving the force. It was therefore decided to stop daylight counter air operations, though such operations are highly effective but result in high attrition rate, which was unacceptable in case of a prolonged war. Henceforth these operations were to be conducted by B-57s at night. The F-86s were to be employed primarily for air defence and Army support operations. F-104s were to carry on with night interceptions of enemy bombers, escort photo recce missions and to act as 'bouncers'.

Air Superiority Operations

To maintain air superiority and capitalize on the edge established in air combat the PAF made several attempts to lure the IAF, from 8th to 23rd September, into air fights by launching CAPs and fighter sweeps of Sabres. The IAF did not fall for the bait. I recall in one of the sorties I was leading a flight of 4 aircraft at 25,000 ft along the border for a long patrol when my controller told me that Gnats were airborne to intercept us. Our controller also told me that Keelor, known as 'Sabre slayer', was leading the Gnats and Keelor had asked for our position. His controller told him that we were 35 miles out at one o'clock. Keelor kept asking for our position and when his controller told him that we were 12 miles out, he called off the interception declaring he was low on fuel. I was disappointed because this was the first occasion that I was so close to an air combat, a dream of fighter pilot, though I had been flying such missions regularly. In few cases the F-104s chased returning Canberras at night as far as 100 miles into Indian Territory having no fear of opposition. Flight Lieutenant Aftab Alam of No 9 squadron made as many as three visits during day light to photograph Halwara even though he did several passes over the airfield but was not challenged. The RT-33 aircraft of No 20 Squadron were sent deep into Indian Territory, with escort, for photo recce missions. During one recce sortie by RT-33 escorted by F-104 when they were near Halwara a couple of Hunters were reported at a distance but they did not interfere and the task was completed without any challenge.

Ground Support Operations

After 7th September, having attained air superiority the PAF had more freedom to undertake close support operations and

interdiction missions resulting in considerable impact on land battle. Air Chief commented after the war:

"Pak Army was under considerable pressure from the Indian troops, but the close understanding with ourselves at that stage, and our air superiority, meant that the PAF could spend its time in locating, identifying and attacking targets; this helped to make up for the lack of direction of the aircraft attacking from the ground."

Throughout the war the Army liaison was a fiasco. Frankly it is not the fault of the Army alone. When the services operate and exercise individually how can proper liaison evolve in a more productive manner? The PAF being the support provider should have taken the lead in establishing a proper system. The PAF High Command should have realized this weak link in the chain in support operations, which consume almost 25-30% of the flying effort. This weakness however was to some extent taken care of in late 1970s. So was the case with the working of JOC (Joint Operation Centre). In the absence of experienced PAF liaison officers with the Army units and the air control link in the front line, our fighter bombers had to spend long time flying around below 1,000 feet looking for their targets resulting in unnecessary exposure to Indian ack-ack. It is however remarkable that PAF did not lose a single aircraft having provided about 500 close support missions during 1965 war even though 50% of its Sabres sustained some minor hits during ground support operations; for the same period Pak Army downed 8 IAF aircraft during ground support missions. On 8th September I was briefed by Station Commander to take formation of 8 F-86s armed with full rocket load (8 into 32 rockets) and attack any worthwhile target outside Khem Karan, a village next to Kasur. The Army Command Centre had the information of large concentration of Indian tanks in the area. I briefed the 8 pilots. I was to lead first 4 aircraft followed by

Squadron Leader Arshad with 4 pilots with the interval of 2 minutes, remaining in visual contact. During run-in to IP while in Pakistan No 4 of the second formation Flight Lieutenant Sadruddin was hit by our army's ack-ack, and he had to eject, landing 4 miles east of Kasur. He was picked up by the local villagers who thought he was an Indian pilot because of his Bengali accent and cast of features therefore he endured a little rough treatment. However he was soon rescued by an army officer. As soon as we pulled up and set a pattern for attack Flight Lieutenant Mukhtar recognized the Pakistani tanks and transmitted that on radio. We circled the area and were waved at by jawans manning the tanks as they were on the move towards Amritsar. We abandoned the mission and returned to base. I apprised the Station Commander for miraculously averting a disaster to the Army formation. I also informed him of large formation of army heading east of Khem Karan. He informed Air Command Centre who communicated the same to Army Command Centre. They were surprised to know the presence of our tanks in the area heading north-east, and one formation heading east. The formation going due east had the outdated maps. It appears John Fricker was not fed correct information about above stated mission for he mentions only 4 aircraft formation led by Flight Lieutenant Arshad in his book 'Battle for Pakistan – The Air War of 1965' (page 123)!

Squadron Leader M Iqbal, PAF's leading ELINT specialist, flew a practice radar homing sortie (to rehearse the Amritsar Radar attack), on 11 September using the mobile radar of 230 Squadron at Rahwali as a target. During his low level approach, he was mistaken for an enemy Canberra and shot down by alert Pak Army personnel manning 0.5in machine guns at Rahwali. The death of Squadron Leader Iqbal and his navigator, Flight Lieutenant Saifullah Lodhi as well as the loss of one of the three specially equipped RB-57s

operated by the PAF was one of the pointless tragedies of war which might have been avoided if the army gunners had been warned in advance regarding the practice run.

Munir's Radar

Squadron Leader Munir was my Wing Operations Officer. He was a very popular officer in the PAF. He was gifted with a happy-go-lucky disposition and his only passion in life was flying and to look after his family. At 36, he was older than most squadron commanders and he fitted in well in every one's company. Though not required to fly because of administrative duties and a speech handicap (stutter) for which he was officially barred to fly operational missions, he nevertheless managed to fly one to two sorties a day because no one could refuse him. Although he flew a few close support missions but somehow he had an obsession with Amritsar Radar and that is why it was known as Munir's Radar. The radar was also known as 'Target Alpha' in the PAF. After the two abortive missions on 6th September that have been described earlier, on 7th September an attempt was made to photograph it with unescorted RT-33 flying at low level. The first attack carried out with this intelligence information was by 4 F-86s loaded with napalm bombs on 9th September. Although they managed to reach the target in extremely bad visibility, Flight Lieutenant Bhatti managed to drop the bomb near enough but not exactly on the target. In the meantime Munir adjusted his pattern but lost the target in thick haze. The visibility was such that further attacks were going to be futile; also, the formation had been warned of interceptors heading towards them. The mission was again abandoned.

On 10th September the PAF carried out 2 missions of 12 aircraft; of which 8 were F-86s equipped with 2.75 in rockets

and 4 F-104 were bouncers. Only first aircraft managed to deliver attack achieving some damage but the dust haze generated by the rockets further worsened the visibility on the target and subsequent attacks did not achieve any worthwhile results. Munir's radar was soon on the air.

On 11th September another attack with 4 F-86s and 2 F-104s as bouncers, was planned. It was to be led by me, with Squadron Leader Munir as No 2, (who rushed in by bribing the earmarked No 2, Flying Officer Siraj with a bottle, if he dropped out with some excuse)! Flight Lieutenant Bhatti was No 3, and Flight Lieutenant Cecil Choudhry was No 4. After the briefing we set off at low level at 0800 hours. It was a half-hour flight to Amritsar. Bhatti, having attacked this radar three times, had become expert at locating the target in very poor visibility due to dust haze. Bhatti was responsible for the navigation to the target. We were on track but were helped by Indian ack-ack which started to greet us well in advance because they were painting us on their radar scope. Bhatti and Cecil were to climb to 7,000 ft to give top cover as soon as I acquired the target, while Sqn Ldr Jamal and Flt Lt Amjad were to set up orbit even higher, to guard against IAF interference during our mission. Bhatti called on the radio, "Target at 3 o' clock." I replied, "I have the contact, Lead and 2 pulling up." By this time the target was an absolute inferno of light and medium ack- ack and a few seconds later there was another call, "Two is hit." As a result of direct hit, most probably by medium ack-ack, Munir's aircraft exploded soon after he uttered these last words on the radio. I continued my attack and hit the antenna with guns. As I completed my attack, Bhatti called and said," Lead how about me having a go." I replied, "Go ahead." I therefore climbed to 7,000 ft to give them cover, Bhatti and Cecil attacked the radar pumping all their ammunition into the target. While flying at 7,000 ft, I could see the heavy guns exploding around me. It felt

like as if I was going through a huge Christmas tree. The Indians correctly appreciated that the radar positioned close to border could only be protected with plenty of small to medium ack-ack. We returned home in a very depressed mood having lost a friend, a good subordinate, and a fine officer who was a professional to the end. The real loss was that of the PAF. When Munir called, "Two is hit" his voice on the radio was calm and cool and unhurried. Bhatti says: "As I looked down, however, I saw three balls of flame tumbling through the air where his Sabre had already exploded. He must have taken a direct hit from a heavy ack-ack shell and never had chance to eject. The flaming wreckage fell on the eastern out skirts of Amritsar town." Munir was reported that evening by the Indians to have been found dead in the debris. Circling above, Jamal had also seen and confirmed the fiery end of the comrade. For the first time, Amritsar Radar was put out of action for several hours, and it remained intermittent for some time afterwards.

Since the Radar only went off for several hours, the High Command finally decided to bomb it out with B-57s, heretofore not approved by the Chief because of its proximity to the city of Amritsar. It was decided to attack the target with 4 B-57s, led by Wing Commander Bill Latif and escorted by 4 F-86s led by Bhatti, along with 2 F-104s. This time the attack went completely according to plan. Each B-57 delivered 7,000 lbs of bombs on the target, and all the aircraft returned home safely. The strike against the Amritsar radar had achieved the dual purpose; the new radar had to be positioned at a new location and it needed detailed calibration for accurate service. It was reported that the radar at the new site caused confusion among the IAF pilots and they did not have full confidence in it.

A Train Explodes

Goods trains especially those leading towards the battle area are fruitful targets for interdiction missions. The PAF had a chance of this type on 13th September when Squadron Leader Alauddin Ahmed, Officer Commanding of No 18 Squadron accompanied by Flight Lieutenants Saleem, Amanullah, with Manzoor, was leading his second offensive patrol on the morning took off from Sargodha. They had blasted a number of enemy tanks in the Chawinda-Narowal sector. Flying low along the Batala-Gurdaspur railway at about 1030 hours the 4 F-86s came across a train on which they dived to attack but stopped because it was a passenger train. They then set course looking for any sign of Indian Army activity. In the goods yard at Gurdaspur station Alauddin had a better luck, there was a long line of freight wagons, a very tempting target waiting to be attacked. This train was carrying ammunition and military stores. They attacked the wagons yielding some spectacular results when the ammunition and military stores were set ablaze. Alauddin pressing his attack to point blank range, he flew so low that his aircraft was struck by fragments from exploding wagons but with no apparent damage he pressed on and was soon engulfed by smoke and debris. The explosion was so violent that the other aircraft barely escaped getting out of control with the force of blast. Pakistani border was about 12 miles away ie, barely 2 minutes flying time. Alauddin called on the radio, "My cockpit is full of smoke" and tried to head towards the border. He again called, "It seems alright now," but those were his last words. Alauddin ejected from his burning Sabre and in the meantime 2 other F-86s from Peshawar gave him cover while descending but he was shot by an Indian officer while descending with his parachute and died in the hospital. In the

words of Squadron Leader Sajad Haider, "If he had reached the ground alive, nothing on earth would have stopped him from escaping." It was a befitting epitaph from a long time buddy. Squadron Leader Alauddin Ahmed was awarded a posthumous Sitara-i-Jurat for his exemplary leadership and valour. Alauddin was 34 years old when he was killed by the enemy. He was one of the most dynamic officers in the PAF. Although short and very slim but had a heart of a lion. He was pleasant, cheerful, and ever ready to help anyone in difficulty. He was one of the best friends any one could have. In him the PAF lost an excellent officer. May God bless his soul.

The B-57 Shuttle Runs

The B-57s carried out 149 missions and 20 were against Indian airfields. The airfields at Adampur, Halwara Pathankot, Jodhpur and Jamnagar were under constant attacks at night. One of the reasons of low activities of the IAF could be the milk runs carried out by the B-57s. On the whole spirit and dedication of all pilots of B-57s Wing was of highest order. The PAF feels rightly proud of them.

T-Birds at War

The home base for T-33s popularly known as T-Birds jet trainers was PAF Air Base Masroor. The Squadron was commanded by Squadron Leader Khurshid Mirza. T-Bird is a jet trainer; equipped with .5 in machine gun and could carry up to 8 rockets. It is a dual version of first generation of the jet fighter, the F-80 the Shooting Star. Its speed and performance is such that it could be used over lightly defended targets but there would always be risk of enemy fighters and would prove a

relatively easy prey. 8 T-Birds were positioned at Sargodha. The instructors were all fighter pilots who were ever eager to jump into the cockpit for flying to the allotted target. On 6th September 4 T-33s from Sargodha led by the Squadron Commander were to attack Ferozepur radar but this radar proved to be equally elusive. All the T-33s got airborne on time but had no luck finding the radar site. Since there were no visible targets the pilots emptied their guns into the airfield area. In one of the other attacks, Mirza's No 2 was hit by ground fire but flew back safely. While at Sargodha they were useful addition to the ground attack force especially against lightly defended targets. They ended the war having contributed their share of effort in war operations.

No 20 Squadron equipped with RT-33s was the photo reconnaissance squadron of the PAF. It was commanded by fearless Squadron Leader Mobariz Ahmed. One mission was flown unescorted over the Tithwal area to obtain a photographic mosaic; another mission was carried out with top cover of 2 F-86s for similar task over Akhnur. Also Amritsar radar was photographed by the squadron after the first abortive attack launched on 6th September. The results were quite accurate; though the exact site of the radar was pinpointed with couple of probable sights but the location of antenna eluded the sharp eye of the camera. It goes to the credit of IAF for camouflaging the aerials very well. On some occasions the RT-33s flew deep into enemy territory without fighter escort. In one escorted mission to Halwara there were Hunters in the area but they stayed well clear of the PAF aircraft, and the task was completed without any interference. The brave pilots of 20 Squadron flew at an average of 3 sorties a day through most of September totalling 60 missions and logging 73 flying hours.

MiG-Baiting Operations

On 14th September Squadron leader Alam got airborne, with Flying Officer Shaukat as his wingman. They were to fly to lure MiG-21s, about 10 miles from Halwara and Adampur at 20,000 ft. This mission being too provocative, the IAF accepted the challenge with two Hunters. Alam was being controlled by SOC Sakesar and he was taken deep inside. Alam asked for his position from SOC as his No 2 was very inexperienced with 300 hours flying experience and only about 70 to 80 hours on F-86 aircraft. Sakesar confirmed that he was 10 miles to the left of Halwara and advised him to turn back 180 degrees; also warned him about the IAF having got airborne for interception. Alam replied, "Now we are here we will fight." As directed by Sakesar finally Alam made the contact. He saw two Hunters about 4-5 thousand feet away. Alam told Shaukat to break into the Hunters and the dogfight started. They were very fast. Alam managed to get behind them and when he was about 14,000 ft, they did a vertical break. One Hunter went downwards and the other vertically up and climbed to 20,000 ft, Alam still behind him. When in range, Alam fired first burst while pulling 6½ 'Gs'. Apparently due to high 'Gs' Alam did not hit the adversary. During the steep climb the 'Gs' began to bleed off, and Alam fired a second burst and this time he was able to score hits. After the third burst the Hunter turned into a ball of fire. The not so lucky pilot was Flying Officer Dara Bunsha. Alam looked back for his wingman but could not see or hear him on radio. He in fact had been shot down by Flight Lieutenant Pingale who had been the victim of Squadron Rafiqui on 6th September. Shaukat also ejected safely near Tarn Taran and became POW. He was fired on from the ground while descending and taken to hospital where they removed a .303 bullet and shot gun pellets. After recovery he was moved to Agra and joined other Pakistani POWs.

Dogfight over Lahore

On 20 September in the afternoon I was to lead a formation of 4 Sabres for CAP along Lahore-Kasur axis. I picked Flight Lieutenant A H Malik of No 5 Squadron, as my No 2, Flight Lieutenant Nazir Jilani, who had been my Flight Commander in No 11 Squadron as No 3 (Deputy Leader), and Flight Lieutenant Amanullah as my No 4. After briefing we picked up our parachutes and helmets and walked out of the bunker to take a ride to our dispersed aircraft. As soon as we walked out of the bunker I saw ambulance and fire trucks going towards the undershoot of the runway where Flight Lieutenant S M Ahmad had crashed landed his badly damaged Sabre. The officer on duty came running and told me about the crash landing. I had no other choice but to attend to the accident and therefore I had to drop out of the mission. It proved to be a lucky day for Squadron leader Sharbat Ali Changazi, who had been attached to the Wing a few days after the outbreak of war. He was standing outside watching take offs and landings. I told him to lead the CAP mission. No doubt he was overjoyed with the chance to fly the mission. He re-briefed the formation and took off. SOC directed him towards Kasur and told to climb to 20,000 ft. The weather was hazy and they could hardly see the ground. As soon as they set up an orbit, Sakesar radar controller warned him of IAF's reaction. He was warned four bogies had taken off and were heading north in their territory. The IAF was not too happy with Sabres having a total freedom of CAP missions; they decided to try to intercept the PAF flight with a mixed combination of aircraft to trick the PAF pilots and controllers. Therefore, a flight of 4 aircraft composed of 2 Hunters and 2 Gnats took off from Halwara. Squadron Leader D P Chatterjee and his No 2 Flight Lieutenant S K Sharma

were from 7 Hunter Squadron, and Flight Lieutenant A K Mazumdar and Flying Officer K C Khanna were from No 2 Gnat Squadron. The Indian fighter sweep mission was, as it seemed, out of luck when Amritsar radar lost contact with them on the scope; the visibility was also very poor. When they reached over Lahore they saw no Sabres and must have become very apprehensive about the whereabouts of the PAF aircraft. To further compound their problem, mutual contact between Hunters and Gnats was lost and the two pairs were on their own. The Sabres on the contrary were under the control of ground radar; they were also sharply looking out and clearing each other's tails. The fun loving Lahorites were in for some excitement very soon. While they were in orbit over Lahore the sharp-eyed Amanullah picked up a couple of specks through the haze, he announced on the radio, "two bandits about 5,000 ft below 11 o'clock." The PAF pilots straight away jettisoned their drop tanks and rechecked their master gun firing switches were in correct position. Jilani picked up two hunters and immediately he and Amanullah dived after them. In the mean time Changazi and Malik spotted a Hunter which they thought was one from the other pair and went after him. In fact it was Chatterjee, one of the first pair who had split up during defensive manoeuvre when attacked by Jilani. Within a few a few seconds two Sabres were chasing a Hunter each in two separate dogfights. The fun loving people climbed up their roof tops on hearing the roar of aircraft. Changazi was first to out manoeuvre the Hunter in spite of one hung drop tank. After two bursts of guns the Hunter started emitting smoke, but the pilot Chatterjee kept on with defensive manoeuvring. While flying with a skid due to hung drop tank Changazi was not registering a good hit. After adjusting with rudder pedals, the next volley landed squarely on the victim's fuselage. It appears that

Chatterjee was incapacitated his aircraft plunged to the ground in Lahore's Manawan area, in full view of thousands of spectators. Malik got so engrossed in the battle – Changazi vs Chatterjee – that he forgot to clear his own tail. For his negligence he paid the price by getting shot by Mazumdar whose Gnat sneaked on to him while he was watching his leader's dogfight. He was barely able to nurse his stricken aircraft into Pakistan and ejected safely over Harbanspura, a suburb of Lahore and was picked up with no injuries. While Jilani and his wing man Amanullah were engaged in a dogfight with Sharma during this melee someone had taken a pot shot at Amanullah. This was most probably Chatterjee, prior to getting into a dogfight with Changazi. Jilani had to act fast for a kill or get shot by the Gnat. The fight in the meantime slowed down, favouring the Sabres. Jilani managed to fire a good volley that landed on the fuselage of Sharma's Hunter. Like Malik, Sharma was able to nurse his aircraft into India and ejected near Katron. This thrilling classic dogfight, over Lahore, the city of exuberant Lahories was the grand finale of PAF's marvellous performance of battle for air superiority.

Night Kill by F-104

On the night of 21st September an F-104 flown by Squadron Leader Jamal A Khan (formerly squadron commander of the same No 9 Squadron, now recalled from Staff College at the outbreak of war), intercepted a Canberra at 33,000 ft and shot it down with Sidewinder missile near Fazilka, inside Pakistani territory. Although the navigator did not eject but pilot, Flight Lieutenant M M Lowe ejected and was captured by the Pak Army troops. Jamal recalls: "It was pitch black and I had no visual contact with the Canberra until the flash of the missile

strike. The Canberra didn't blow up; neither did it catch fire, probably because of the high altitude. But it started spiralling down, and then visible flames started coming out of it when it had got down to about 15,000 ft; I circled around and watched it until it hit the ground. I felt good, but when the Indian pilot was picked up he said the whole business was very 'unfair'. If anything it was particularly unfair on his navigator, since no ejection seat is provided for him in the Canberra, and he could not get out."

As a consequence of the disastrous day attack on 7th September on the PAF airfields, IAF stopped day light operations against the airfields. The IAF with a force of 60 Canberras decided to carry out counter air operations against PAF airfields during nights only. Except for three nights, the Canberras pounded the areas all-round the airfields. They dropped about 90 tons of bombs in the vicinity of Sargodha and only one 1,000 lb bomb landed about 100 ft from the intersection, causing no damage to either of the runways. A 4,000 lb bomb landed close to main fuel storage but did not explode. The Canberras had a little better result at Peshawar because a bomb landed close to a parked B-57 on the night of 13/14 September. This was one of the very few determined attacks by the bomber pilots launched thus far. Luckily the 4,000 lb bomb did not explode and as a result all lined up and fully loaded B-57s got away by sheer good luck. The reason for not achieving any worthwhile results by IAF pilots was lack of determination on the part of pilots, to carry out proper attacks. It was quite evident the IAF pilots came, because they had to, but dropped their load anywhere around the airfields. I suppose fear of large number of various types of guns on the airfields may have been inhibiting factor in attacking with proper attack profile. After entering Pakistan, Canberras would fan out towards Sargodha, Rawalpindi and Peshawar. They were under close control of Amritsar radar

which kept them warned of F-104 interceptors and gave them guidance to keep them clear of the fighters. The PAF did not have the capability required for night interceptions. The disadvantage with F-104 was that its AI (Airborne Interception) radar was also ineffective because of clutter and ground returns below about 4,000 ft. On the whole Canberras were ineffective during night operations and F-104s were unable to intercept for want of proper night interception capability for low level interceptions.

Some Lighter Moments

During the war, Squadron Leader Khurshid Mirza and Azim Daudpota were staying at my residence. When the siren started blowing Azim ran out and jumped into the trench and landed on top of the guard who was sleeping in the trench. There was a big howl that perhaps was heard at least a mile away. The guard started crying that 'sahib jee' has broken my ribs. The guard was merely acting because he was sleeping on duty. The fact was that a hefty Azim weighing 200 lbs landing on top of anyone would make him howl!

We had a very nice army officer attached to our base. He was a gentle and intelligent officer. He was our ground liaison officer (GLO). His duties were to brief pilots detailed for close support and interdiction missions for the army. He was superb in his job. He had his tent and a trench dug up to take shelter during raids. However, after every night of bombing raid by Canberras, he would dig his trench a little deeper. By the end of war he needed a ladder to get out of his trench! When the first time the siren blew and ack-ack started firing, I my wife and two daughters started going towards trench; my youngest daughter Saqeba who was three said "Main dar nahin rahi, meri sirraf tangain luzzer (laraz) rahi hain. (I am not afraid, only my legs are trembling).

Since my work schedule was long, starting at 0430 hours and ending at about 2200 hours after submitting the whole day's report, I decided to send my family to Haripur Hazara so that they could spend time peacefully. On 7th September a rocket landed in front of my gate! It did not explode. I have kept it as a souvenir of September 1965 war.

Cease Fire

Indian Army was badly mauled during battle of Chawinda and therefore India pleaded for an unconditional cease fire at the United Nations; Pakistan also agreed, with some reluctance. However when the final terms for cease fire were being negotiated, the Indian Army launched a major offensive in the Lahore and Khem Karan sectors on 21st September, in last desperate effort to restore some of the losses at the hands of numerically inferior force. The Indians were however blocked from achieving any substantive gains on the ground. The cease fire came into effect on 23rd September 1965.

Comparative Strengths

On the eve of September 1965 war, comparative strength of the combat aircraft in the inventories of the two adversaries was as follows:

	IAF	PAF
Fighters	476	104
Bombers	60	26
Total	**536**	**130**

Aircraft and Aircrew Losses

As it happens in all wars claims of adversaries in the heat of the battle, are exaggerated, and India and Pakistan were no exception to this phenomenon. Initially both sides claimed to have destroyed about 100 of each other's aircraft, though this was subsequently proved to be unlikely but the final assessment remained an unknown quantity. This was particularly true in case of India, since Pakistan had made its war records and personnel available for impartial examination, and published its losses in complete detail. With relatively small air force, in fact Pakistan would find it difficult to conceal losses any bigger than were actually admitted; besides US Military Assistance Advisory Group was counting every aircraft lost in the battle. Total PAF combat-related losses during September 65 war, not including accidents, were 12 F-86F, 1 F-104, and 3 B-57s, involving 10 aircrew fatalities. These losses were officially confirmed by the US Military Assistance Advisory Group who had intimate knowledge of the PAF aircraft inventory both before and after the war. On this basis, the extent of PAF losses could be said to have been established beyond reasonable doubt, but the situation regarding the Indian Air Force was not easy to establish.

Immediately after the war India publicly admitted the loss of only 35 aircraft. Latest research of IAF losses indicates a minimum of 66 aircraft lost, resulting in deaths of 17 IAF aircrew; this includes 39 aircraft destroyed on the ground during the PAF's airfield strikes. This resulted in a minimum IAF loss of 54 aircraft, against the PAF's 19, not allowing for Indian losses attributable to flying accidents.

Based on PAF's 2,279 sorties flown, the aircraft attrition rate works out to be 0.7%. The IAF flew a total of 3,937 sorties which results in an attrition rate of 1.67%, which is more than

twice that of the PAF (Details at Appendix 'A'). It is clear that the PAF fought an adversary three times its size and inflicted twice the attrition. This, by any standard is a highly commendable performance and speaks volumes of the training and motivation of its pilots. It can be considered a fair measure of PAF's performance during the 1965 War.

Retracing Events

When Air Marshal Asghar Khan took over the command of the PAF he inducted the new weapon system received from United States when we joined SEATO and CENTO pacts. No doubt these pacts were US-centric but we needed the weapons to have good defensive capability against the enemy. With the new weapons Air Marshal Asghar Khan built a very powerful and hard hitting air force. He organized the PAF on a firm base and posted outstanding officers as station commanders who were also top fighter pilots. They in turn trained their subordinates to highest standards as required of a top class air force. Thus the PAF was transformed into a hard hitting machine by those especially chosen officers. The result was we had a breed of officers commanding wings, squadron commanders and potential squadron commanders, second to none. Air Marshal Asghar Khan never compromised on quality while selecting base commanders, officers commanding fighter wings and the most significantly the squadron commanders of fighter squadrons. He also got operational plans prepared and these were practiced regularly. As fate decreed he was retired on 22nd July 1965 after being 8 years as the Air Chief of the PAF. Air Marshal Nur Khan replaced Air Marshal Asghar Khan. Prior to his appointment as Air Chief of the PAF he was Managing Director of Pakistan International Airline for 6 years. Being a top class pilot and with deep incisive mind it did not take him long to get into the

stride. By the time the events started unfolding ie, Operations 'Gibraltar' and 'Grand Slam' he was firmly in the saddle with his hat on but with a little tilt like those of cocky World War II fighter pilots! Air Marshal Nur Khan led the PAF very successfully. He has only been faulted for vacillating on launching the first surprise attack during late afternoon on 6th September. In my opinion however he was justified in what he did. He gave full support to the army on two crucial sectors throughout the day. If he had not done that, the Indian Div Commander may well have had his drink in Lahore Gymkhana Club as promised by him to his nation. There is however no justification for delaying the move of 8 F-86s to Sargodha from Mauripur that started a sequence leading to wasted opportunity and needless losses. Moreover, there can be no sound explanation for insisting on splitting a few of Sargodha's Sabres between two heavily defended targets so as to satisfy the contents of the war plan for the first strike. Notwithstanding these unusual decisions, the PAF was able to a give a crippling blow to the IAF in air fight on 6th and 7th September. This spectacular display of prowess practically paralyzed the IAF and left the field open to the PAF for the remaining period of the war. The PAF thus let loose its might against the Indian army in all the sectors. To ensure that PAF pilots had the aircraft ready to fly maximum sorties, the engineers and ground crew worked very hard and with extreme dedication during day as well as night without any regard to their own safety. They succeeded in producing a very high flying rate. They rose to the occasion and I salute them for their zeal and courage.

The question is how did so few trounced so many in such a short time? For the answer we have to look at the killing spirit imbued in them, the determination to fight for their country regardless of any danger to themselves and above all their strong faith, which in fact provided the firm roots to their undaunted sprit of sacrifice. With the incessant punishment inflicted on the

IAF and the Indian Army, the Indians were forced to seek a truce. It also suited Pakistan because due to very high intensity of operations, our forces were running short of ammunition and explosives. Although the acceptance was lamented by Air Marshal Asghar Khan as well as many officers in the armed forces and for they could not understand why, after blocking the advance the Indian Army and the PAF having ascendancy over the IAF, we stopped when we had the opportunity to punish the enemy? This certainly will remain a moot point every time this war is discussed.

Our Army had had an excellent plan ('Grand Slam') that got wasted when put into action without proper planning and safeguard. Had the plan been launched with the Army ready and manning their positions on international border, the outcome might have been altogether different. The rationale of escalating the war, without proper planning and assessment of possible repercussions, is beyond comprehension; therefore in my opinion it ended up as a futile war for either of the antagonist.

Coveted Award

Although I was busy in organizing the schedule of daily flying, I did find time to fly 14 air defence/escort and 5 ground attack missions during 17 days war. For my services to the nation I was awarded the coveted award of Sitara-i-Jurat. The citation read:

"Wing Commander Mohammad Anwar Shamim in his capacity as Officer Commanding 33 Wing made significant contribution to the high morale and aggressive attitude of the pilots who flew from this station. He efficiently managed the changing requirements and ensured, while fully meeting these requirements that pilots got sufficient rest and other comforts to enable them to fly intelligently and confidently. During the

operations, he led 14 air defence/escort missions and 5 ground attack missions. His leadership during these operational missions was aggressive and confident and served as a very good example for the pilots to follow. He accepted long hours of duty, including operational sorties at odd hours of the day, with enthusiasm. Wing Commander Mohammad Anwar Shamim is therefore awarded Sitara-i-Jurat."

7
Post-War Years

Establishment of Operational Command

After the war the PAF High Command decided to establish Operational Command to ensure high state of readiness at all time. Heretofore, the Principal Staff Officers at Air Head Quarters had dual function that is formulating policies and planning as well as ensuring implementation of policies; and ensuring war readiness of base. That earlier set up was adequate for a small size force but due to induction of American military aid the PAF had grown to a good size to warrant bifurcation of duties. Therefore, on 1st November 1965 Operational Command was created. Air Vice Marshal M Akhtar was appointed as the first Air Officer Commanding of Operational Command; Group Captain Saeedullah Khan became second-in-command. I along with officers of other branches was to look after war readiness concerning our respective branches. Group Captain Saeedullah Khan chose a good team. I would like to specially mention Wing Commander Chaudhry who was from air defence branch. He was a most knowledgeable officer of his branch. He was however very talkative and would give his opinion on every subject. He liked arguments and would not hesitate to give contrary views. For this

quality he was often invited to meetings in Air Head Quarters by senior officers. His presence would definitely liven up the meetings especially when it was conducted by the C-in-C. Unfortunately he was diagnosed as having cancer and soon died. His body was flown to East Pakistan where he was buried with honours. May God bless his soul.

A Replacement for the F-104

During the post-war period, the Command decided that the PAF needed a replacement of F-104 for three reasons. Firstly we had only ten aircraft in the inventory; secondly, we faced shortage of spares; thirdly, the Indian Air Force had inducted additional MiG-21s and were fast acquiring operational status on those aircraft. Our F-6s (MiG-19), supplied by China, had limitations and were no match to the MiG-21. During 1965 War the Americans stopped all military aid to Pakistan, whereas India continued getting full support from France, Soviet Union and UK. Although we were getting some spares from international vendors but it was a very difficult period for us. For the-above mentioned reasons, the Operational Command put up a case for induction of a Mach 2 aircraft in the PAF. The case was mooted by Air Head Quarters in a conference chaired by the C-in-C, Air Marshal Nur Khan and attended by all Principal Staff Officers of AHQ and officers of PAF Operational Command. There was a lot of heated discussion between AHQ and Command HQ. The discussion was essentially between two officers ie, Group Captain Zafar Chaudhry, Director of Operations and Group Captain Saeedullah Khan, second-in-command of Operational Command. Frankly speaking, all others had not done any home work on that subject. When it appeared that Command HQ were not winning the argument, the Assistant Chief of Staff –

Maintenance, Air Commodore W Turowicz, interjected that with five million dollars he would be able to support the F-104 for a few more years. Air Vice Marshal Yousaf, the Deputy Chief of Air Staff, sensing the tilt in favour of not acquiring the new aircraft, went against the proposal and the C-in-C agreed with him. The proposal was thus dropped. Unfortunately, no one during the conference supported Group Captain Group Captain Saeedullah Khan, including his boss Air Vice Marshal Akhtar. On our way to the office he was most upset because he had spent two hours briefing the Air Vice Marshal, who did not utter a word to support him. He said that his support would have carried a lot of weight in tilting the argument in favour of acquiring a Mach 2 aircraft. Group Captain Zafar Choudhry, on the other hand felt that the F-6 could perform the interceptor's role effectively and there was no need to spend a colossal amount on a new weapon system.

Visit to India

Soon after the war, Air Chief Marshal Arjun Singh, C-in-C Indian Air Force invited Air Marshal Nur Khan and a few officers to visit India. The Indian Air Chief had already visited Pakistan on an official invitation by our Air Chief. The Air Marshal was accompanied by Group Captain Zafar Chaudhry, Director of Operations, Personal Staff Officer to C-in-C and me, the Wing Commander, Tactical Operations. On the due date, we landed at Palam International Airport. We were very cordially received by Air Chief Marshal Arjun Singh, and a few officers. The rationale of the visit was to foster goodwill in the aftermath of the war, exchange POWs and establish border flying limits. Air Chief Marshal Arjun Singh was tall, handsome, aggressive and cocky. Our own Air Marshal was no less either. He was also tall, athletic,

aggressive and cocky. They hit off well and had good chit chat. Air Chief Marshal Arjun Singh tried to give the impression that they had the upper hand during the war whereas Air Marshal Nur Khan had a similar view. Air Marshal Nur Khan proposed a joint analysis of the air war. For obvious reasons, that proposal was not accepted; the topic was left to be analyzed by neutral historians at a later date. The exchange of POWs was settled amicably and it was agreed that both air forces would restrict flying within ten miles of each other's borders. I was taken out on tour to visit historical places which were very fascinating for me because I was the only one who had not visited India earlier. Places like Connaught Place, Red Fort and Qutab Minar and many others about which I had read in history books gave me great pleasure when I saw those with my own eyes. On our way back from the visit, I saw many shanty huts with half starved bearded men around the area. I asked the escort officer as to who were living in those huts on the outskirts of the capital city. The escort officer was rather apologetic and said that those were Muslims and "s*hudars*," the lowest class Hindus, who had left their homes and villages for fear of persecution by the fanatic people of their society. On the day of our departure we were warmly seen off. For me it was a memorable visit.

Posting to PAF Staff College

After about seven months stay in the Operational Command I was posted to PAF Staff College Drigh Road as a student. During that short period of posting at Operational Headquarters I learnt a lot especially from Group Captain Saeedullah Khan. He was well read, knowledgeable, and had excellent grasp of what the PAF needed for the future. He was firm and demanded hard work from his subordinates. He was a thorough gentleman and a

dedicated family man. He was a well-dressed officer and also appreciated those who dressed up well. In fact, he was what one would truly call an officer and a gentleman.

We had to report to PAF Staff College on 24th June 1966. My wife, Tahira was in the family way and the baby was due on 27th June, according to the lady doctor. However Tahira developed pains early and was admitted in PAF hospital on 19th June and, at one minute past midnight, our son Asad was born. It was a joyous occasion for the family. My parents had come for the occasion from Haripur Hazara. My father was overjoyed to be blessed with a grandson. He recited the 'Azan' (call for prayer for Muslims) in Asad's ears, a traditional Islamic rite. Asad was fair and a beautiful baby. He had brown eyes and jet black hair. Tahira left the hospital as early as the doctors would allow. She had decided to accompany me to Staff College. I took ten days leave to accommodate her wishes. Luckily Khurshid Mirza, my brother-in-law was also detailed for the same course. Since my mother-in-law and the family were also going to live with Khurshid Mirza, it was excellent news for us. We decided to hire a large house in Karachi near Drigh Road to live together. For us it meant no problems in looking after the children and household activities. It was a wonderful arrangement for us. We were looking forward to hard work for five days and enjoyment on weekends without any worries for the children.

The Staff College courses are not like those at usual colleges. These are high pressure courses and one needs to work hard and submit exercises. Those officers who had continued to enhance their knowledge by regularly studying after graduating from the Academy had a much easier time and therefore enjoyed the student life. For those who did not develop that habit, the course was tough and kept them busy even on weekends. The exercises were designed for multiple solutions and the students

were required to submit a logical answer to whatever path they choose. The exercises were generally given on Mondays or during first couple of days of the week for submission on next Monday. A wise student would complete the exercise by Friday or Saturday and submit that the same day. He thus had whole weekend free to enjoy. Those who kept on discussing and making continual changes remained busy till Monday morning and therefore had a busy time at the College. The College arranged many lectures by top experts in their subjects from Pakistan as well as from abroad. Those lectures were very informative. The students needed to read about the subject in advance to be able to take part in a fruitful discussion after the lecture. The College arranged a few tours in the country and one tour abroad. Those were very valuable in enhancing the knowledge. Regular social evenings were organized to break the monotony and also for interaction of the families.

Working at Air Headquarters

At the end of the year the Commandant, Air Commodore A Rahim Khan interviewed the students to inform them how they had had been assessed on the course. He also gave us our posting orders. The course ended with social evening and final good byes. I was posted to AHQ as Deputy Director Plans in the Operations Branch under Group Captain Khaqan Abbasi. The Assistant Chief of Air Staff – Operations was Air Commodore Zafar Masud. That was my third posting under him. Group Captain Abbasi discussed the requirements of Plans Branch with me. He said he was not at all happy with the progress of war plans as we had a few plans but those did not have details. He tasked my branch to make detailed plans on every aspect of war deployment. He had learnt that during a course he did in America. I could visualize monumental work

ahead for us. I discussed that task with my staff and we realized that we needed officers from other branches as well to undertake this task and most urgent requirement of good typists cleared to handle top secret documents. With Air Commodore Masud at the helm, we started work straight away and within a span of ten months produced twenty four volumes of war plans on every conceivable subject I also searched for a Concept of Operations in all files but could not find one written any where. When I pointed out that to Air Commodore Masud he directed me to produce one in two weeks for discussion and approval by the Air Staff. I produced the paper and it was discussed in the Air Staff meeting chaired by the C-in-C; it was approved with minor changes.

While I was writing the Concept of Operations, I realized that we had only one squadron of F-86 aircraft based at Dacca. The other airfield at Chittagong was not mutually supporting in East Pakistan. Therefore there was an urgent need for two more mutually supporting airfields around Dacca; also, there was an urgent need to augment the force level from one squadron of 16 aircraft to three squadrons composed of a mix of 50 F-6 and F-86. That level of force, along with infrastructure would have ensured adequate presence of PAF in East Pakistan. I wrote a paper on that urgent requirement and put it up to Assistant Chief of Staff – Operations. He read it and agreed with my recommendations. He told me to arrange a meeting of Principal Staff Officers, chaired by C-in-C Air Marshal Nur Khan. The meeting was arranged; the paper was put up for discussion and was approved. The C-in-C directed that a case be taken up with the Government for approval which was promptly done. The case for vital requirement for defence of East Pakistan was not approved by the government due to paucity of funds. It was quite evident that we had not learnt the hard lessons of 1965 War. Had our recommendations been accepted the Indian thrust in East Pakistan in 1971 would have

been challenged forcefully and a more honourable and acceptable solution might have been possible.

Foreigners in Our Own Country

A court of inquiry, composed of Wing Commander Iftikhar Ahmad Khan (Khanji) and me, was assembled at the end of 1967 to carry out an inquiry into an aircraft accident in Dhaka. We stayed in the Officer's Mess. During evening we went to Gymkhana (Dhaka Club) for an outing. As soon as we entered the club hall there were three ladies standing there. On seeing us, one of them burst out saying, "what are you Pathan or Punjabis doing here"? We ignored that un-lady like outburst and walked passed her. I enquired from a Bengali officer as to who were those ladies? He told me they were wives of senior government servants. A few days later I went to the bazaar along with a Bengali officer for sight-seeing and to purchase a few items. While we were standing in line in front of a shop for buying and when it was my turn, the shop keeper ignored me to serve three customers waiting after me in the line. Even protests by the Bengali officer were ignored by the shopkeeper. He only served me when I was the only customer. One day the temporary batman provided to me requested me to take him to West Pakistan as my servant. I told him that I have a servant and therefore I did not need his services. He said, "No sir you do not have servants in West Pakistan; there you have either clerks or officers." Such instances were not uncommon in the Eastern Wing of our country. I wrote those in my report because in my opinion they could be harbinger of a bigger problem in the future. In fact, I wrote that I have never felt more as a foreigner in any country than in East Pakistan. I wonder if our military and political big wigs were alive to the alienation of people that had taken root in our Eastern Wing against the Western Wing!

Meeting Deadlines

I learnt a lot during my tenure of posting under Air Commodore Masud. He never tasked any officer to do more than his capability. He also gave ample time to complete the task given by him. After briefing the task, he would ask the officer how much time he would require to complete the task. In their enthusiasm the officers would generally ask for less time, however Air Commodore Masud would always add a few more days so that the officer had enough time to do full justice to the task. He would note the day of submission of the paper in his diary and expected the completed task on his desk on time. He would always come to his office on time and stop work and leave on time. He never worked on weekends and holidays and also did not expect his subordinates to do so. On one occasion he saw me entering AHQ and stopped me. He enquired the reason I was going towards the office. I told him if you give us task on Friday and expect to be produced on Monday, there was no way we could do it unless we worked on Sundays. He said that he wanted Monday next week and not the coming Monday. I told him that we had also worked during past two Sundays. He kept quiet and on Monday we saw a very unhappy Group Captain Abbasi who had tasked us to complete the job in less time than required by his boss.

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Air Advisor To His Majesty King Hussain

I had been earmarked as Pakistan's Air Attaché to France. In early 1968, Jordan had requested Air Headquarters, through our Government, for a team to study the requirements for modernisation of Royal Jordanian Air Force. Group Captain Khaqan Abbasi proposed my name as the team leader. Possibly, he saw an opportunity to push me out and take my place as Air Attaché. I declined to accept that offer because I knew that after the report was written, I would be asked to implement it as Air Advisor to his Majesty King Hussain. I took an interview with the Deputy Chief of Staff who assured me that Air Headquarters would send another officer as an Air Advisor, after my report was accepted by Jordan. I needed a team consisting of experienced officers from Electronics and Military Engineering Service (MES) and I was to handle Flying and Air Defence matters. Air Headquarters selected Squadron Leader Yousaf of Electronics Branch and Wing Commander Mohiuddeen from MES. Those officers enjoyed good reputation in their branches and I was lucky to have them on my team. I was also promoted to the rank of Group Captain.

In April 1968, the team reached Jordan. We were received by Colonel Saleh Kurdi the Commander of the Royal Jordanian Air Force (RJAF). It was a hearty welcome. We were explained the working of the RJAF, and briefed on the infrastructure of the Air Force. We had a tour of all the places of interest for future planning. We were also given studies on development of RJAF by three other countries. We realized that the RJAF had, in fact, been a totally non-operational air force. It had two airfields adequate for jet fighters, one at Amman the other at Mafrak about 30 miles from Amman. A new airfield was under construction about 100 miles from Amman close to Iraqi border. There were no pens to protect the aircraft, and no direct communication with pilots on alert duties. The only way to scramble the aircraft on alert duties was by a call to air traffic control at Mafrak through a non-dedicated overhead telephone line and the controller would fire flares to scramble the aircraft. That method was totally unacceptable in peace and war. There was only one high powered radar in the North of Amman at Ajloon, near the Israeli and Syrian borders, perhaps adequate for civil aviation but too vulnerable during war. There was no method of detecting low flying aircraft entering the border and thereafter, tracking them visually or by low looking radars. There was no Command and Control System where the Commander of the Air Force and his senior staff could exercise control. Jordan was faced with the threat of supersonic aircraft in the area whereas it had only the subsonic Hunter aircraft on its inventory. RJAF would be totally out-classed in the air battles. The Hunter aircraft was only adequate for low level strikes and close support to ground forces. The RJAF pilots were good but needed advanced training in fighter tactics. Concrete pens for aircraft were needed for three airfields. The PAF could provide blue prints for the pens.

The above-mentioned were the major areas we were to address in our report. I was told to give in writing, my comments on the reports submitted by other countries but I declined to do so. I told them to wait for our report and then decide which report served their needs. I, however, briefed Colonel Kurdi verbally about the inadequacies in the reports due to lack of knowledge as well as insincere intentions to sell arms and equipment. Since he had direct accesses to His Majesty, he must have passed that information to him. We worked hard for three weeks and produced a report with various mile stones marked on the time scale. Our main recommendations were: 1) Install secure communications by laying underground co-axial cable to all vital areas. It was to be in the form of loop so as reach the destination from either direction as a back up. 2) Induct mobile high powered radar about 100 miles south west of Amman to offset the vulnerability of existing radar on the border. In addition, induct four low looking radars to detect low flying aircraft. Also, raise Mobile Observation Units (MOU), to be deployed during exercises, emergencies, and reporting directly to Command Head Quarters. 3) Set up underground Command Head Quarters to be manned 24 hours during peace-time and act as a battle station for the Commander during emergencies and war. 4) Induct Mach 2 aircraft as soon as possible to offset the inferiority in that class of threat. Since the time required for inducting of new aircraft was three to four years, we recommended that RJAF induct used ex-USAF aircraft in the interim period. PAF would extend help in converting RJAF pilots' as well training ground crew. The induction would take less than two years. As soon as the report was ready I informed Colonel Kurdi who arranged a high powered meeting of Chief of Staff and senior army officers of GHQ. The meeting was chaired by His Majesty, and Prince Hasan Bin Talal also attended the

meeting. On the day of the meeting we were all prepared for the presentation. The copies of the report were distributed to concerned people. I started off the presentation by covering the deficiencies in the RJAF as required of an operational force. I told the audience that while preparing our report we had considered threats originating from Iraq, Syria and Israel. I asked Squadron Leader Yousaf to cover communication systems and induction of high and low looking radars. Then Group Captain Deen covered the up gradation of airfields, construction of concrete pens and underground Command and Control Centre. Once again I got up to put forward a case for induction of Mach 2 aircraft, training of pilots and ground personnel. I recommended that at the present stage used, cheap and easily available aircraft, like F-104 need to be inducted and simultaneously orders be placed for new Mach 2 aircraft from the market. With the help of time scale chart, I explained the induction of the proposed plan to be completed in two years. With the permission of His Majesty I asked for questions from every one. Some pertinent questions were asked and those were answered by the team. At the end, His Majesty thanked us for an excellent presentation and accepted all the recommendations for modernization suggested by us. When we came out of the conference room I saw Group Captain Abbasi waiting for us. He heard about the presentation and its acceptance. He told His Majesty that AHQ had selected Group Captain Shamim as his Air Advisor. His Majesty was quite pleased and welcomed me on board. However, it was a bolt out of the blue for me because that was not the understanding given to me by the Air Headquarters. We left Jordan happy because our report was accepted without any changes for implementation. My team members were of very high calibre and very tactful. They got along very well with their counter parts in the RJAF.

When I reached AHQ, knowing that the die was cast for my posting to Jordan, I still wanted to opt out and head for France. I decided to seek advice from Air Commodore Masud. He knew the whole story of the game played to deprive me of going to France. His advice was, "If you want to have a good time, go to France and if you are looking for a professional posting in that case head for Jordan." "The choice is yours," he said. There and then, I decided to accept the posting to Jordan. Since I had already cleared with Colonel Kurdi to bring the same team I requested AHQ to issue posting orders. I put in a request that I and Squadron Leader Yousaf would like to live on the base while Wing Commander Deen would like to live in hired accommodation in the city because he had a large family.

When we reached Jordan every thing was taken care of for our comfortable stay in Jordan. Colonel Kurdi was a very meticulous officer and unbeatable as an administrator. We did not need to buy a single item for a fortnight. We therefore started work the very next day of our arrival. We were allotted our offices. Colonel Kurdi gave me his own office and he shifted to his new office. Yousaf started planning the route for underground cable and Deen went to H5, the new airfield under construction near the Iraqi border, where the work was very slow. Deen straight away understood that the airfield was planned on top of volcanic rock and therefore excavation for 10,000 feet of runway and taxi tracks was going to be very time consuming and extremely costly. He asked for boring of test holes in the area and soon solved the problem by shifting the lay out of the runway a few yards form the planned site. That made the contractor extremely happy because he was working pro bono, for regard for His Majesty and his family. I and Deen drew a plan for concrete pens for Mafrak, H5 and Amman airfields. In the mean time, we also received drawings for the concrete pens

from PAF. Work started on pens in Mafrak and Amman. After sorting out the lay out for coaxial underground communication cable, we asked RJAF to award the contract which was done immediately. Colonel Kurdi was one the most honest and dedicated officers that I have come across in my life. For that rare quality he had a carte blanche from His Majesty to undertake works approved in the report. He was soon promoted to the rank of Brigadier. Yousaf and I started work on low looking mobile radars and development of observer units, and together with Deen and Brigadier Kurdi, we selected a site for underground Command and Control Headquarters. Deen started to work on design of the building. His Majesty approached United States Government for F-104 aircraft and that was approved by them. The aircraft would be sent in semi-knocked down state in crates. The RJAF selected low-looking radars made by Plessey Company of UK. It was one of the best radars at that time and it was a reputable company. It was decided by High Command at army Headquarters to give all the electronics projects to Plessey on turn-key basis. Since it was a big and important project, His Majesty desired to chair the meeting when Plessey would present their case. On the day of presentation, His Majesty arrived and the presentation was done. They quoted a price tag of four million UK Pounds. Every one agreed with the quoted price. His Majesty looked towards me and asked for my opinion. I said the price was too high. Deen was sitting next to me and I asked him what he estimated the project should cost. He replied at the most one and a half million pounds. His Majesty asked could you do it in the RJAF. I replied in the affirmative and added that in any case; Plessey was only supplying diagrams and supervision where as the job was actually going too done by the local Jordanian company. With the drawings and supervision supplied by Plessey, we would be

able to complete the project within the price estimated by us. His Majesty ruled that the project would be done by the RJAF. That decision made Brigadier Kurdi very happy and lots of other people including Plessey very unhappy. The project was completed on time, with lot more additional work, with an expenditure of 1.6 million pounds. It was due to the combined efforts of Deen, Yousaf, and RJAF officers and staff. All the other projects were getting completed as per schedule. Yusuf's pet project was competed on time and it ushered in a revolution in the telephone system in RJAF and other Army units. At that stage Brig Kurdi asked me if I could get more officers of different branches to help the RJAF. I said it would be appropriate if he himself visited Pakistan and requested Air Headquarters because earlier, when I broached the subject to him, he did not want any more officers and that was conveyed to the PAF. He decided to go to Pakistan but he wanted me to accompany him, to that I agreed and we both visited Pakistan. Brigadier Kurdi was well looked after by the PAF. Whatever help he wanted in training of airmen, officers as well as additional manpower was agreed by Air Headquarters. He returned back to Jordan happy because his entire package of requests was accepted by the PAF. After 1967 War with Israel, the Arab leaders had decided to organize their armed forces into two Commands for better coordination, command and control. The Eastern Command was composed of Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Syria and Iraq whereas Western Command had Egypt and Libya. Although the rationale for such a Command was good but after a lot of efforts at lower level the organization did not take any concrete shape.

In 1969 an advisory team from Pakistan Army arrived in Jordan as requested by them. It was headed by Brigadier Atta Muhammad. As soon as he settled down he wrote a letter to me

that since he was senior to me, henceforth all correspondence to Pakistan was to be routed through him. I replied that according to the instructions issued to me by Air Headquarters, I was to work independently with RJAF, and all contacts were to be made directly with PAF. I attached the copy of the letter with my reply. As far as he was concerned the issue was settled. However a few months later additional Army officers arrived in Jordan, headed by Major General Nawazish Ali. I, along with two PAF officers went to receive him at the airport. Brigadier Kurdi volunteered to come along with us as a courtesy gesture to the Major General. Mr Rahat Saeed Chahtari, our Ambassador in Jordon, was also present to receive the party. The Major General went to the Ambassador's residence to stay with him till his family joined him. The Ambassador was living alone. I called on him, and subsequently, used to visit the Ambassador's residence every Sunday until the General shifted to his own residence. I also gave a big party in his honour. After a month or so the General asked for a visit and briefing by the RJAF. I passed his desire to Brigadier Kurdi who readily agreed. The date and time was set by the two Headquarters. We were all ready to receive the General but he did not come and also did not inform the RJAF of his change of plan. I asked Wing Commander Deen, to find out the reason. He told Deen that Group Captain Shamim should have come to take him to RJAF and drop him back. That was a strange logic coming from a senior officer of our armed forces. No doubt Brigadier Kurdi felt insulted. On a subsequent visit by the General to RJAF Head Quarters, Kurdi did not attend the presentation nor received him.

I would like to write a few words about Brigadier Saleh Kurdi. The officer was formerly a squadron commander of transport squadron in the rank of Captain. He was also the personal pilot of His Majesty. When an abortive coup took place in Jordan, he flew

His Majesty and the Royal family out of Jordan. He brought them back when the coup was controlled. For his loyalty, he was promoted as Major and made Commander of Royal Jordanian Air Force. He also had direct access to His Majesty for all matters pertaining to RJAF. He was under the General Headquarters for administrative purposes only. His Majesty knew that Kurdi was extremely loyal, honest and a dedicated officer. He loved Volkswagen sedan cars. Therefore on every birthday, a new VW would be standing outside the Commander's residence, a gift from His Majesty. He also helped him with additional finances to cater for his future needs because the King knew Kurdi would not be able to do all that in his salary.

When there was a tense situation in Palestine due to Israel creating problems in Al-Aqsa Mosque, Egypt sent Sabri Al-Khoury, the Foreign Minister, for discussion, just in case the uneasy situation might lead to war. A meeting was called by His Majesty to discuss the tense situation. The meeting was attended by Mr Sabri Al-Khoury, Foreign Minister of Jordan, General Sharif Nasir, Chief of the Armed Forces of Jordon, General Al-Hayari, the Chief of Staff, Major General Nawazish, Brigadier Kurdi and I. In the meeting Mr Sabri Al-Khoury explained the situation and wanted to know the readiness of the armed forces in case the situation deteriorated any further. His Majesty asked his Generals for their assessment of readiness of the Armed Forces. Both said that Major General Nawazish Ali would explain the readiness of the Army. Major General Nawazish said the Amy was ready and he had prepared plans to deal with any contingency. He further said that his plan did not need the support of the Air Force. Then Brigadier Kurdi was asked and he passed his hat on to me. I said the RJAF was not ready as yet because we were in the third quarter of our induction plan. Presently we could give only limited support with obsolescent

Hunter aircraft. The Israeli Air Force was too strong and was equipped with newly inducted modern aircraft which may prove to be a decisive factor. Mr Khoury agreed with my reasoning and said that since they were also in the process of induction of modern aircraft and hence, were not prepared as yet to start any action that will lead to war and would like to defuse the situation. His Majesty agreed with Mr Al-Khoury's assessment and closed the meeting. After we came out of the conference room, Gen Nawazish took me aside and asked me, in a harsh tone, why I contradicted him in the conference. I told him that I was Air Advisor to His Majesty and, therefore, I was honour bound to put forth the factual position, and I did precisely that. He became very angry and told me that he would sort me out. I thought the threat would certainly be a harbinger of problems ahead. A few days later, Major General Nawazish wrote a paper on how to deal with Palestinians living in Jordan in case such a need arises. When I visited him, he showed me the paper which was also signed by him. I asked him who the recipients of that paper were. He said he had sent it to Prince Hasan and a copy to Lt Gen Al-Hayari. I told him that Lt Gen Al-Hayari was a Palestinian. I also cautioned him that the paper was likely to reach the press in Beirut. Unfortunately, it was published in an English newspaper in Beirut the very next day. That was a diplomatic blunder. It made our relationship with Palestinians sour for ever. Major General Nawazish was unnerved and asked for permission from Prince Hasan for a press statement. He was not allowed to do that. If Major General Nawazish had given the copy only to the Prince, chances were that no damage would have occurred and, if he had not signed it there would not have been any damage at all. Next day a few armed Palestinians knocked at door of Major General Nawazish and when he opened his door they asked him to put his arms up over his head

and after registering their anger they left. In my opinion Major General Nawazish should have had the moral courage to return to Pakistan. He was simply hated in Jordan by the Palestinians who were two thirds of the population of Amman.

When things were heating up with Israel, the Jordanians requested for a contingent of Anti Aircraft Artillery. When it arrived in Jordan, Major General Nawazish wanted to deploy those in Amman. Wing Commander Deen told me that we should not show our presence in Amman and those guns should be deployed at Mafrak or H5 airfields especially soon after the newspaper incident. Since he was a junior army officer, seconded to PAF, he did not have the courage to tell the General what to do. I spoke to Major General Nawazish and he reluctantly changed his deployment plan. The lesson one learns was that juniors often have good ideas; they should be encouraged to express their opinions freely and heard with open mind.

One day, Major General Nawazish called me and told me not to send any report directly to AHQ and all correspondence was to be routed through him. I told him that I would follow the existing instructions given to me by Air Headquarters until I am directed to do otherwise. He said he was going to Pakistan shortly and would sort out that with Air Marshal Rahim Khan who had replaced Air Marshal Nur Khan. I surmised that a change in protocol would be agreed to by Air Marshal Rahim Khan who would listen to any suggestion by the Army especially from General Gul Hasan, the Army C-in-C. No doubt a unified structure of our contingents, posted to other countries, was a logical step provided the person heading the organization had the necessary qualities of a sound and a mature leader. On his return to Jordan, Major General Nawazish seemed very happy. Air Marshal Rahim Khan had agreed to his request to put the PAF contingent under his command. AHQ agreed to the suggestion

but for administrative purposes only. On the first day on duty, after his return from Pakistan, Major General Nawazish called me to his office and told me triumphantly that from then onward the PAF contingent had been placed under his command. I however reminded him that it was for administrative purposes only. My interjection, however, was not received by the General very well. He gave me a long pep talk on how to go about with my job and how to deal with Jordanians! It was useless and entirely pointless talk. Often there would be one or two senior army officers sitting in his office to witness as he exercised his authority or in case I was rude or disobedient to him, otherwise they had no earthly reason to be there in the office. Unfortunately I had to endure that senseless talk every so often.

In one of our meetings he asked me if I had four servants given by the RJAF. I replied in affirmative. He said he was going to ask for at least four servants for himself too. I told him being a General he deserved more than me. The General did ask for servants from the Jordanian Army but they told him that the Army had no system of servants. He quoted my case who he said, was his subordinate, but had four servants. The Army replied that it was between Brigadier Kurdi, Commander RJAF and Group Captain Shamim, and it did not concern them. That became one more sour point for the General against me. One day, after working hours, I was informed by Brigadier Kurdi that His Majesty King Hussain would visit my house in ten minutes. No doubt the notice of the arrival of honoured guest was very short due to security reasons. We quickly got ready just in time. His Majesty accompanied by Brigadier Kurdi arrived on time, stayed for twenty minutes and had had tea with us. He wanted to meet our children. Tahira brought them to meet His Majesty. He gave a pat to Farah and Saqeba and picked up Asad and kissed him. Asad at time was about two years old. He thanked us for tea

and departed. Although I did not want to tell any one regarding the visit but Major General Nawazish came to know and called me the next day to know the details. After hearing about the visit, he told me that His Majesty would also visit his house. I told him that being the senior most officer of the Pakistan Armed Forces, he deserved that honour. I thought the Major General Nawazish was not happy about the visit. By that time I had enough of useless lectures from the General. Brig Kurdi was also surprised as to why the General was calling me to his office so often. I discussed the whole issue with Tahira, and told her that I wanted to go back to Pakistan as I could not work any more under those conditions. She told me to do what ever suits me. By that time all the projects were running on time and only supervision for a few months was required to see them to fruition. I apprised Brigadier Kurdi of my decision who tried to dissuade me but I was adamant. He talked to His Majesty who was also disturbed. He enquired if writing a letter to PAF through the Ambassador would help? I told Brigadier Kurdi in such situations the service always had regards for the senior officer so I would prefer going back to PAF. I forwarded the application to Major General Nawazish who tried to persuade me to stay. He even came to our house to convince my wife who told him that in service matters it was the husband who invariably decided. He also sent Mr Chahtari, our Ambassador, to dissuade me and my wife for asking for repatriation. Our answer was the same. Nevertheless Major General Nawazish refused to forward my application. Since I was serious not to serve under the General I sent the application through RJAF to Air Headquarters, and I received my posting orders back to Pakistan. I was told to report to Air Headquarters on 26th January 1970 which was only four months short of my two years posting to Jordan.

In November 1969 we went to Cairo for a visit. Egypt perhaps is the best place in the world for studying the ancient history. While I was in Cairo I paid a visit to the Embassy of Pakistan. There I saw what was unbelievable. The staff was busy in burning classified papers. Mr Akhund, the Ambassador, told me that the Egyptian Ministry of Foreign Affairs had advised them to do that because Israel was likely to drop commandos around Cairo and take over the capital. I told the Ambassador that it was well nigh impossible for Israel to undertake that kind of venture. I said even the Americans will not try that kind of operation, in isolation. I added that a surgical operation against a lightly defended and far away target could be a possibility and not against a huge area like Cairo. I said it must be that the Government wanted to scare people to gain some sort of an advantage. I also called on operations officer in the Western Command to ascertain the facts. He told me the same story. He also said that they were fed up as being the spear head for the Arabs. He added that they had to beg for money for arms and ammunition. I was shocked when he said that they would instead like to be part of Africa than the Arab World. I thought there must a meaning behind what he said and I mentioned that in my report.

We returned back to Amman, all refreshed. It was time for farewell parties. I called on His Majesty and was accompanied by Brigadier Kurdi. His Majesty was very affectionate and told me to consider Jordan as my second home and the job option was always open to me. I thanked His Majesty for his confidence in me. I also called on His Royal Highness Prince Hasan. My farewell calls included Mr Ali Ghandour, the Chairman Jordanian Alia Airline. He offered me captaincy on Boeing aircraft in six months if I wished to join Alia Airline. I thanked him for his offer. Since Brigadier Kurdi was also a Director of Alia Airline he had told me about the offer having discussed

with Mr Ghandour. It appeared that my friend Brigadier Kurdi was more worried about my future than I was, No doubt I had apprehension about my future, considering the Army taking over the country and Air Marshal Rahim Khan taking over the PAF. There was no doubt in my mind that PAF was my first and last preference but how could I predict what tomorrow had in store for me? I was awarded Wisam al-Istiqlal (Order of Independence) by His Majesty King Hussain for my services as Air Adviser to him On 6th January 1970 we left Jordan for Germany to pick up an Opel sports car to drive to Pakistan.

From Beirut we were booked on East German airline with night stay in Beirut to be provided by the airline. When we reached Beirut we went to the office of the airline. The attendant saw the ticket and the coupon for the night stay and told us to come tomorrow at 8 AM. When I showed him the coupon he again told me to come back tomorrow. From then on he pretended not to know English. For us there was no choice but to book in a hotel for the night stay. Next day we reached the airport at 8 AM. We were told that departure time was delayed by one hour. That announcement was repeated every hour till we departed at 4 PM. The aircraft was Il-18 and had faulty air-conditioning system. Every one in the cabin was smoking and a thick layer of smoke was hanging beneath the roof, resulting in difficulty in breathing. Eventually we reached East Berlin at night at 1 AM. There was heavy snow on the ground and it was extremely cold. We were made to walk to a war time hangar that had one table for civil aviation personnel. Only one person was there to distribute four forms for each passenger. We had to stand in line to get the forms. Asad our son was two and a half years old; and our daughters Saqeba and Farah were less than ten years of age. It was very difficult to control Asad to stay in line. The moment he would move away the guard would come

dashing to him pointing rifle with bayonet at him. I had to make a quick dash to get him in line. After standing in line for one hour we got the forms. We stood in the corner to fill the forms. Thereafter it took one more hour for immigration formalities. It was 4 AM and bitterly cold. We were told to sit outside on the benches. The bus would pick us at 8 AM to take us to the border of West Berlin. The bus came on time and we got in quickly. One guard accompanied us to the border. At the border, in no mans land, the guard asked us to get out of the bus and take another bus waiting for us 50 yards away, belonging to West Berlin Bus Company. The moment we entered the bus the driver greeted us warmly. We heaved a sigh of relief. After a few seconds later the West German immigration officers walked in with a smile and welcomed us to the free world. That was a most pleasant greeting we would always remember. We went to a hotel and slept till next morning. Only in the morning we realized the nightmare we had gone through. Although it was cold but we spent two days site seeing and window shopping. We picked up our car from the show room where a friend of ours was waiting for us. We drove to Amman via Turkey and Syria. After a couple of days rest we loaded our boxes and started the journey home via Iraq, Iran and Afghanistan. We had no problem while driving through Iraq but we had to wait for entry visa at the border for Iran. After getting the necessary entry visa we drove to the Afghan border. At the border we were being unnecessarily delayed so after a few hours I went to the immigration officer to find out the reason for the delay. His excuse was that he did not have a pen. Actually he wanted money to do so. I gave him money to buy a pen and gave him mine to make entry visa for us. He promptly stamped our passports and kept my pen. It was mid afternoon and I had lost four precious hours of driving time. After about two hours I

pulled up at a gas station to fill up my tank. There I observed four suspicious looking fellows eyeing my car. After paying the money I saw them going out to the other side of the road towards a jeep that was standing on higher ground. Instead of driving straight I reversed my car to the entrance of the gas station. I raced the car and saw the jeep heading ninety degrees to my car. Since I was fast I missed the collision by a margin of a few feet. Had I taken the normal route to join the main road, I would have been involved in collision and that was what they had planned to do. What made me to take the other route I would say just luck and pilot's instinct. They started chasing me. Since I had a new car I was pulling away from them and after following me for seventy miles they turned back. I decided to keep going as fast as the car would go. In the mean time I passed a wagon with five American hippies. We waved at them and they waved back. After about twenty miles my rear left tyre burst perhaps due to heat caused by driving too fast for a long time. It was evening time. The only way I could change the tyre was to open the boot, take out the entire luggage and the spare tire. I was very hesitant to do that in the middle of no where in Afghanistan and that too in the evening. While standing outside I was hoping for help from a bus or a traveller. In the mean time five young Americans drove past me. After a few yards they reversed back and asked me if I needed help. I told them the whole story. They all came out and within twenty minutes we were on our way. Since I had no spare tyre they followed me about twenty miles up to a way side hotel. They advised me to stay the night at the hotel and head for Kabul in the morning. Under the circumstances I thought that was a sound advice. One of them brought a bottle of beer and handed that to me. I was reluctant to accept that but they insisted that I should take it because of what I had gone through, I needed it to relax. We thanked them for all the help

they gave us in a very dangerous situation. In the morning after we had a hearty breakfast, we set course for Kabul. We reached Kabul at noon and were booked in hotel by my wife's relative who was commercial attaché in the Embassy. We told him the story. He told us that it was one of the methods of robbing the passengers by deliberately staging a collision. He said we were very lucky to get away. We decided to stay two nights at Kabul to become absolutely fresh prior to entering Pakistan.

9
Mid-Service Years

After two nights rest we hit the road to enter Pakistan via Torkham. I had informed Wing Commander Zaffar Iqbal (ZI) of our arrival and both husband and wife were waiting for us at Torkham. They were very kind and took us to their home in Peshawar.

An Unsavoury Homecoming

The next day I wore civilian dress and, with a resignation letter in my pocket, drove to Air Headquarters. I went straight to see Air Commodore Masud, my former boss. He warned me that C-in-C was very angry with me because of false information that was fed to him by the Major General Nawazish. He advised me to be very patient and to tell the Chief my side of the story. He rang up the Chief's office and got me the appointment with him. I went to his office and I was ushered in. The moment I stood before him he asked me what happened in Jordan. As soon as I started talking he lost his temper and told me to go out of the office. I went to Air Commodore Masud and told him the unreasonable attitude of the Chief because he did not let me utter a word. I told him that I was going to the Air Secretary to hand in my resignation. In the mean time, Air Commodore Masud

went to the Chief and urged him to listen to my side of the story. As soon as I reached the Air Secretary's office the Chief buzzed the Air Secretary to send me to his office. When I entered his office he said, "Are you cooled down?" I politely replied, "Sir, I do not need to cool down." He asked me what the problem was between me and Major General Nawazish in Jordan. I requested the Chief to apprise me regarding the alleged problems Major General Nawazish had complained about; only then I would be able to give the answers. He opened up by asking me why I did not receive the General when he landed in Jordan. I replied that it was a lie and I had received him at the airport along with my team, and Brigadier Kurdi also joined me as a token of courtesy, although he was not required to do so. That could be verified by Mr Chahtari our Ambassador in Jordan. He enquired if I had formally called on the General. I replied that I did, and also visited him every Sunday for one month at Ambassador's residence where he was staying till his wife came to Jordan. I added that I gave a big party in his honour at my residence. At that stage the Chief realized that he was taken for a ride by the General. He said according to initial report submitted by Group Captain Abbasi, who had replaced me as Air Advisor, nothing was ready so far. I requested the Chief to ask Air Commodore Masud to send him the time scale chart and then ask me the questions. Air Commodore Masud brought the report and opened the chart to check the mile-stones for completion of various projects. Air Commodore Masud explained to the Chief that all programs were running on time and the first report sent by Group Captain Abbasi was based on half truth with mala-fide intentions. The recent report that we had received from him (after just fifteen days of first report) had given the true picture, but showing as if he had got the projects completed. Having satisfied himself the Chief told Air Commodore Masud to return

to his office. When the Chief learnt about the true picture, he became a different person. He told me that he was posting me to PAF Station Sakesar as Sector Air Defence Commander North and Station Commander. He said during his last inspection he was very unhappy with the running of the base. He said he would revisit Sakesar after three months and would like to see visible improvement.

Command of PAF Station Sakesar

PAF Station Sakesar had high powered radar and was Sector Air Defence Control Centre. Because of its location the base served as eyes and ears for the PAF in the North. Lore has it that during "Mahabharta" wars (mythical Indian history) it was also an observation post of Koroos, during their wars with Pandoos many centuries ago. I reached Sakesar on 26th January 1970. Sakesar is perched on the highest peak of the Salt Range. It is 4,000 feet high, therefore the climate is pleasant in summers and cold in winters. The view from top is breathtaking. The beautiful valley of Soan lies to the North and while sitting on the hill in clear days one can see River Indus, Uchali Lake and other towns and villages. To the south lie Sargodha, Khushab and Mianwali cities. Also, majestic rivers Jhelum and Indus are visible, including, Kalabagh Dam. Both northern and southern views could be enjoyed while sitting at the top at same time. It had only one small village and had not expanded mainly because of non-availability of water. The villagers had to descend down to the river to fetch water. The hills had wild olive trees and the fruit from these trees was very bitter. Perhaps enough of water supply and planting of olives and fruit trees could turn the place into a hill resort for Punjab. While I was studying the problem areas at the base which were pointed out by Inspectorate and the Air Chief, we had a heavy snow fall at night. When I went to office half

the airmen were missing. When I enquired from the Station Warrant Officer about the reason for less attendance, he told me that due to snow many airmen did not turn up for work. I told him to get every one out of their houses and barracks and put them to work to clear all the roads. The roads were cleared in about four hours. The fear of snow was gone and every one looked fresh and happy. That became the standard operating procedure (SOP) for the future. I also noticed that any airmen who went on leave returned three to four days late. To put a stop to that I issued a directive that hence forth any one who over stays leave will be put in the cell (local jail) at the station for the number of days he over stays plus equal number of days as extra punishment. Next weekend two airmen went on leave and over stayed for two days. They were put on charge and brought before me. I awarded them four days detention in the cell. I asked my Station Warrant Officer why they had disobeyed the order. They told him that they wanted to test the Station Commander. That put a stop to disobeying of standing orders. After having dealt with the issue of discipline I turned to cleanliness of area and the Officers' and Airmen Messes, the sour point during the inspection by the C-in-C. In the mean time, Mrs Shamim organized the industrial home to keep the wives of officers and men engaged in some activity, which was very essential in a far off place like Sakesar. Her logic was that if the wives were happy, the homes would be happy, and therefore men will be happy. She also improved the school by inducting teachers from amongst educated wives of officers and men. After three months the C-in-C came for inspection. The inspection went off very well. During lunch the Chief told me that I had done an excellent job in Jordan. The Chief went back very happy.

As I have mentioned earlier we had brought a new car that was to travel back to Pakistan. It was an Opel sports car but had a regular engine. I did not opt for an engine of a sports car for its high fuel consumption and high value and hence, higher customs

duty. I sent Flight Lieutenant Salim Metla to Lahore to pay the customs duty. When he took the car to customs inspector he said that it was a sports car and the duty would be high. Salim told him that the car had a regular engine and not of sports version. The inspector asked for graft to assess the duty as that of a normal car. Since Salim was instructed not to pay any money, the Inspector assessed the duty as that of a sports car. The duty was Rupees seven thousand more than it should have been for the model. I told Salim not to pay the duty and return back to base. A few days later I went to Lahore to handle the payment of customs duty my self. When I was walking through the corridor in uniform, perhaps with a worried look, a gentleman approached me from behind and tapped me on the shoulder and invited me to his office. He was Mr Masud Dhar a customs officer. He told me that he saw me with a worried look and that was why he approached me. Over a cup of tea he asked me if there was any problem. I told him the whole story. He took my papers, examined them and excused himself and went to his boss. He brought my papers back with duty reduced from Rupees 19,000 to 12,500 which was five hundred rupees less than I expected. I thanked him for his help in bailing me out from a difficult situation. Such officers are an asset to their respective services as well as the country and we should be proud of them. For my part I shall always remember Mr Masud Dhar with respect.

Course at National Defence College

On 19th July 1971, I was posted out to National Defence College (NDC) for a course. The course was scheduled to start on 1st August 1971. It was a very short notice considering the nature of the course. Normally, the officers were given at least

three months notice so that they came prepared for the course, having read all the books and material recommended by the college. In our case ie, PAF officers, the short period gave us time to read only two books because we had to shift to Rawalpindi, in a rented house and settle down quickly. The course was of very high standard. Eminent persons from all walks of life, experts and scholars on various subjects were invited to give lectures. The students and the staff had fruitful and lively discussions. Very pertinent questions were asked by the students. In case any student was unable to prepare himself in advance on the topic under discussion, he could borrow a couple of questions from Brig Kamal Mateen who had always prepared about twenty to thirty questions in his note book on every topic. He was our banker for questions. Since me and my colleague Group Captain Sikander did not get time to read all the books and material, we had to borrow questions from Brig Kamal Mateen, for about two months, till we caught up with the flow of the course. My thanks to Brig Kamal Mateen, who had a distinguished service in the army as Lieutenant General and, after retirement, served as our Ambassador in Thailand. The subjects covered were Ideology of Pakistan, Economics, Geo-Politico-Defence studies and many other subjects. Towards the end of November we had completed all ground studies. The remaining period was to be devoted for individual thesis; in-county tours and a tour abroad. While we were under training the situation in East Pakistan was deteriorating very fast. It was decided to close the college and post out the officers to their war time deployments.

I was called by Air Marshal Rahim Khan on 3rd December 1971 to his war time office in Chaklala to inform me of change in my war time posting from Sector Air Defence North at Sakesar to Sector Air Defence South in Korangi Creek, Karachi.

I was to leave the same day in the evening by C-130 aircraft. Before I go on any further to cover my roles as Sector Air Defence Commander South in the war, I would like to cover the events those led to secession of East Pakistan from the Western half because that was the basis of the war.

Prelude to 1971 War

Soon after 1965 war Sheikh Mujeeb-ur-Rehman the leader of the Awami League announced his Six Points Formula for staying together as one nation. That provided the starting point of civil war six years later because it was not handled politically to the satisfaction of the leaders and the people of Eastern Wing. Undoubtedly, germination of these six points was the outcome of prolonged social inequality, perceived idea of being a colony of the Western Wing. Yet another major factor was the correct perception of people of East Pakistan that they were abandoned at the mercy of India during 1965 War. Although a lot of effort was made during President Ayub Khan's rule to narrow the disparity between wings as well as to remove the real and perceived notions but such enormous efforts are a function of time and availability of resources.

In 1971, when India signed a defence treaty with Soviet Union, it suddenly shrunk the time required to bring the internal crises under control. Soviet Union also wanted to teach Pakistan a lesson for being part of treaties (SEATO and CENTO) that were against their interest. The military action taken in East Pakistan in March 1971 against the majority party, the Awami League, was a blunder, knowing that India was covertly behind all what was going on in the political field. Besides, the overwhelming majority of people had been alienated as mentioned above. Although many senior politicians from West

Pakistan were against any military action and were very strongly advocating for a political route to be followed to resolve the impasse, but unfortunately their advice was disregarded by the government and also by a major political party. Countries in the past have used military force to preserve their integrity. India crushed Khalistan movement with a sledge hammer because Pakistan had neither the resources nor the right to interfere in their internal affairs. No doubt there are many countries which straighten out their internal problems with use of force. However, in our case, it was a dangerous course to follow because the two wings were 1,200 miles apart with hostile country in between, which had the tacit backing of a Super Power. An agreement was signed by India and Pakistan through the efforts of USSR at Tashkent for ostensibly lasting peace between the two countries on 10 January 1966. That agreement, however, set in motion agitation against President Ayub Khan and with time, it progressively gathered momentum. The events got so out of control that Ayub decided to resign, and hand over all power to General Yahya Khan the C-in-C of the Army on 24 March 1969 instead of handing over to Abdul Jabbar Khan the Speaker of the National Assembly. Mr Jabbar Khan was a prominent politician from East Pakistan and he may have been able to bring about an acceptable political solution to the imbroglio. Alas, we missed that chance to sort out our problem ourselves. Although Yahya Khan promised to restore sanity but the country plunged into deeper convulsions. After a year and half of futile efforts by General Yahya Khan to restore normalcy in the country, he decided to hold general elections. Those elections, though fair by any standard, unleashed political forces that undermined the very concept of Pakistan as a single nation. Total lack of foresight by the Government and intransigence of the political parties on both sides, were responsible for

worsening of events in the country. The demands of the two major parties were so antithetical that the Government of General Yahya Khan was unable to bridge the gap. Instead of choosing route of political solution, General Yahya Khan, with backing of the largest political party from the West Wing, decided to go for a military solution – that perhaps was the biggest blunder General Yahya Khan made to restore normality in the East Wing. While the internal feuding was at full swing, India had prepared its armed forces to overtly intervene so as to dovetail it with political anarchy that she had covertly created in East Pakistan. Thereafter, she was waiting for perfect timing to unleash her juggernaut for a quick kill. The 1965 Indo-Pak War, even though the PAF had established air superiority over the IAF, can be called a draw because no side was the clear winner in achieving their goals on the ground. India however could not shake off this negative image. India's weapon systems were bolstered by USSR, France, and UK after 1965 War and by USA after 1962 war with China. They had the financial resources to pay for those weapons. Therefore she set events in motion to teach Pakistan a lesson once for all.

Their plan was to tear away East Pakistan from West Pakistan, a soft target, in a quick surgical operation. To achieve their goal they had incited hatred against West Pakistanis, particularly the armed forces. They managed to achieve great success in their endeavour. In fact the Government of Pakistan itself presented the rationale for Indian intervention when armed forces took action against its own people that resulted in a human tragedy on a massive scale and large number of people took refuge in India. That was also the turning point when most of the countries lost sympathy with Pakistan just because it used force to avoid secession. The Indian plan was to help secession of East Pakistan and after achieving that goal, their aim was to turn to West Pakistan in case

international environment permitted, after the so-called liberation of East Pakistan. India did not want to start a war in West Pakistan simultaneously because she had convinced the international community that the mission was undertaken solely to help allegedly 10 million refugees who had crossed into their territory. However, international agencies were never allowed to visit refugee camps to determine the authenticity of the highly exaggerated claim. Apparently the whole world was against India's attack on a sovereign nation. However in reality, we had few friends who stood by us through thick and thin. The USSR was alienated by Yahya Khan's rebuff to Kosygin's proposal, when he visited Pakistan in May 1969, for economic cooperation amongst Pakistan, Iran, Afghanistan and USSR. Also, powerful forces in America were not in favour of Pakistan as was obvious when they forced the House of Representatives to suspend 425 million dollars aid bill. In fact, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee took a further step by approving a resolution blocking economic and military aid to Pakistan. In the book "White House Years" Henry Kissinger has described how Pakistan was being pushed into a 'pathetic position'. He wrote that the victim of the attack was an ally to whom they had made several explicit promises. He further wrote that a stern warning to India on the first day coupled with plausible threat of aid cut off might possibly have given Mrs Ghandi pause before she escalated. "Plaintive appeals for restraints only revealed our hesitation and may have even spurred Indians towards military action instead of restraining them."

The weaknesses and deficiencies that Indian Air Force experienced in 1965 War were taken care of by early 1970. They acquired additional new aircraft, modernised their air defence system, improved their dispersal facilities and created lot of reserves of hardware during the previous six years. The weakness in training and combat tactics was a paid lot of

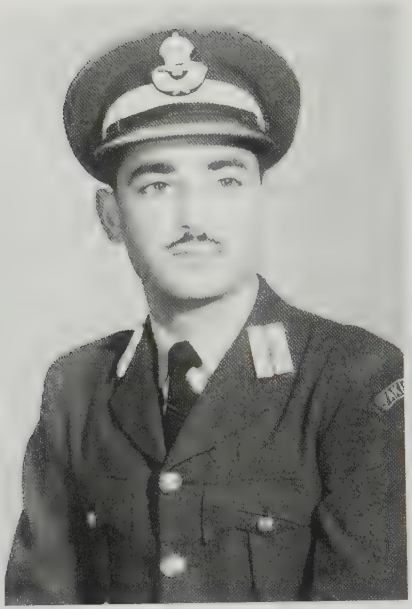
attention. In fact, IAF was fully prepared for war on both fronts. In East Pakistan the IAF deployed 10 Squadrons based on many airfields surrounding East Pakistan. Against this PAF had just one Squadron, one airfield, one medium range, mobile radar, one low looking radar and none of the mobile observation units (MOUs) as these could not be safely deployed for early warning due to insurgency. After 1965 War, PAF found itself in a very difficult situation. The United States, the main supporter of our weapon systems, placed an embargo on supply of spares and also, no new aircraft could be purchased from them. Due to paucity of funds the number of new aircraft required to meet the threat from other sources were out of question.

The deficiencies of night interceptors and replacement of F-86 Sabre was the most critical requirement. Consequently Pakistan had to induct old vintage F-6s from China and with great difficulty, managed to get funds to purchase Mirage-III aircraft for night interceptions as well as for deep strikes in the enemy territory. One significant addition in 1967 was that of used 90 F-86E Sabres" (Orenda-powered CL-13, Mk-6) along with spares, from German Air Force to replace F-86Fs which had become old and unsupportable for lack of spare parts. In June 1967 No 14 Squadron was re-equipped with these aircraft. With limited financial resources some improvements were also made in ground and air defence capabilities.

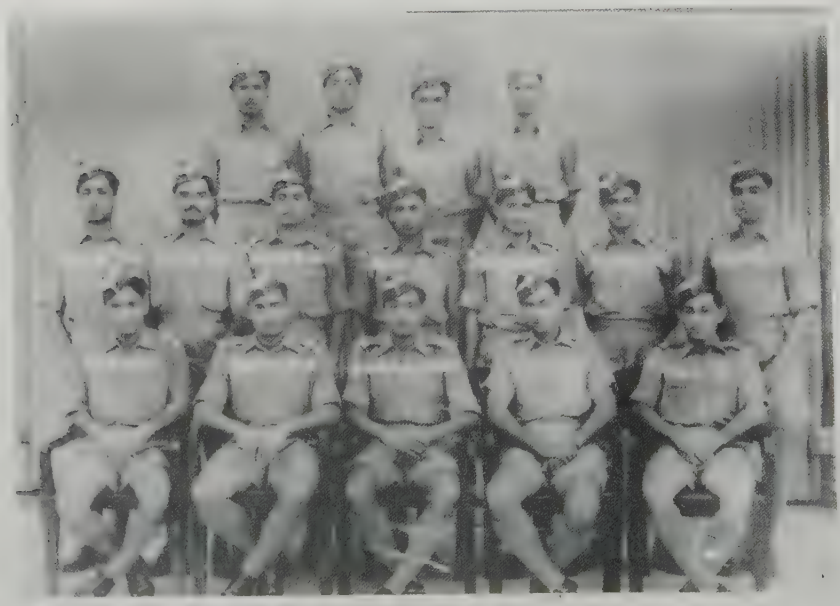
After having prepared the grounds for invasion, India wanted to complete the surgical operation as quickly as possible just in case international community intervenes and brings about a political solution. That of course, would have been total negation to their grand design. With wide disparity between the two countries in the strength of armed forces and implosion in East Pakistan, the ideal stage was set for India for a direct involvement. She therefore launched a full scale attack, without

My father Muhammad Rafiq, BA, BEd, Aligarh University

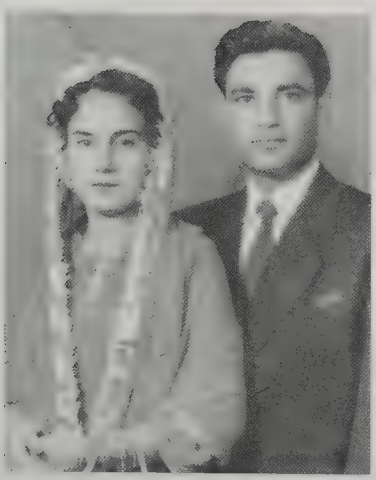
My mother Nawab Begum



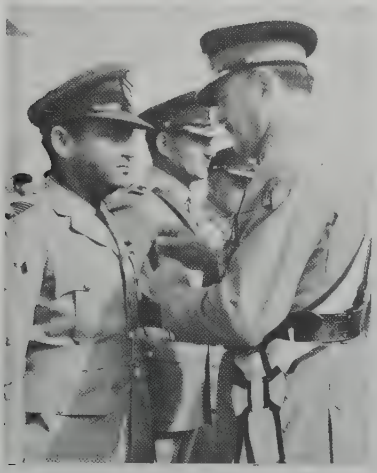
No 1 Squadron PAF College, Risalpur



As a cadet at Royal Australian Air Force College, 1951



Picture taken after Nikah Ceremony on 9th July,



President Ayub Khan awarding Sitar-e-Jurat after 1965 War

HE King Hussain Bin Talal of Jordan

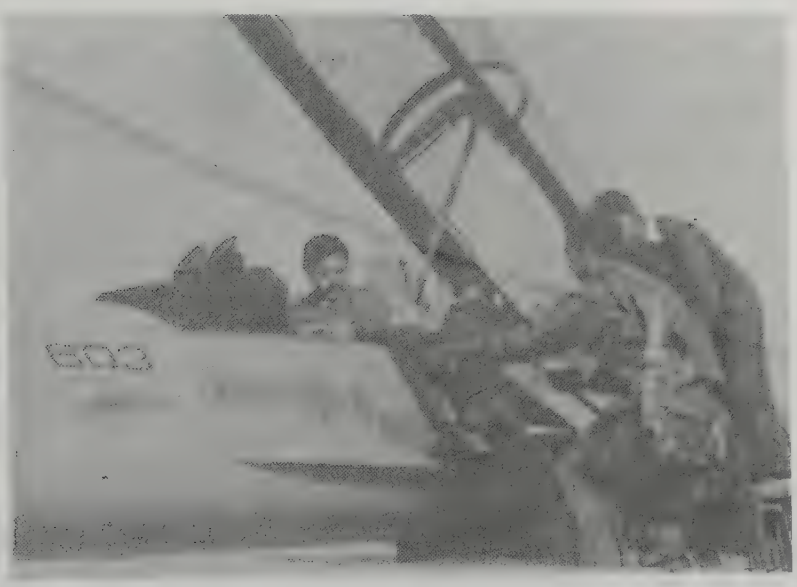
Taking over as CAS from Air Chief Marshal Zulfiqar Ali Khan

With family members

With General Alan, Chief of Air Staff, USAF

Members of Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee during Exercise

With the President and first batch of F-16 pilots



First solo flight on F-16 at Sargodha on 3rd March, 1983

Members of Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee, 1984

President Zia-ul-haq conferring Nishan-i-Imtiaz (Mil)

With grandchildren

declaration of war, on 21 November 1971 for possibly a final round with Pakistan. No doubt it was perfect preparation and planning and timing couldn't have been any more appropriate to achieve their aim.

The PAF presence in East Wing was woefully short of requirement. It had one Squadron of aircraft equipped with F-86Es operating from the lone operational airfield (the other airfield under construction near Kurmitola was not available by that time). As against this, Indian Air Force's 10 squadrons equipped with Hunters, Gnats, Su-7s and MiG-21s totalling over 200 aircraft dispersed and operating from many operational airfields all around East Pakistan, was ridiculously disproportionate to the threat. It was like fight between Goliath and David but this time David had only half a round stone instead five for his sling. The PAF proposal for urgent requirement of constructing three mutually supporting airfields and positioning a mix of 50 F-6s and Sabres was not sanctioned by the Government due to paucity of funds. That strength, together with better military strategy of slow retreat inwards would have delayed the Indian advance sufficiently to give international community time to propose a more honourable solution for the two wings. The serious limitations faced by PAF in East Pakistan during that period were: In East Pakistan the PAF had 1,222 airmen on its strength. 645 of these were Bengali airmen who were laid off duty, creating a serious shortage of manpower, especially in technical trades. A few East Pakistani officers went over to India with classified information compromising our security. The early warning of incursions by low flying enemy aircraft, were not available because Mobile Observation Units (MOUs) were withdrawn as 40 airmen and one officer were murdered by the local residents. East Pakistan defences were totally inadequate and the eastern wing was at the

mercy of India. Two additional Pak army infantry divisions were rushed to East Pakistan six months prior to India's full scale attack from four directions. This addition though helpful was too late. The Pak Navy had one destroyer and 4 gun boats on its strength, an unrealistic force for the task they were required to perform. Overwhelming population had turned hostile to our armed forces and also generally to West Pakistan.

10
War Again

Events in East Pakistan

Prior to taking action against rebels, President General Yahya Khan took a tour of East Pakistan along with a few senior officers to discuss ground and air action against the rebels, to bring normalcy in that part of the country. Lieutenant General Sahibzada Yaqoob Ali Khan, General Officer Commanding East Pakistan and Air Commodore Zafar Masud, Air Officer Commanding East Pakistan gave briefings to the President. They were against taking any large scale action and recommended a political solution to the problem at hand. This was not agreed to by the President. Lieutenant General Sahibzada Yaqoob Ali Khan tendered his resignation as he was opposed to any large scale punitive action. His resignation was accepted and he was replaced by Lieutenant General Tikka Khan. Air Commodore Masud was recalled and retired from service. He was replaced by Air Commodore Inam-ul-Haq (later retired as Air Marshal).

When Indian armed forces overtly attacked East Pakistan on November 21, 1971 the PAF could only muster 295 combat aircraft in both wings whereas IAF had 1,025 combat aircraft and 275 fighters in reserve. In November 1971, No 14 Squadron

operating under extremely adverse conditions flew 170 sorties in support of the army when it was engaged against Mukhti Bahini rebels and, by mid-March, the army had considerable success in their mission of controlling the insurgency. India, realizing the set back to their overall plan, ordered their army to cross the border on 21st November, without formal declaration of war.

The demand for air support increased and No 14 Squadron flew 100 sorties in aid of the Pak Army to hamper their advance. The Squadron attacked tanks and troops in around Chaugacha area starting 22nd morning but did not encounter any air opposition during these operations. The same day at about 1515 hours a flight of three aircraft led by Wing Commander Afzal Chaudhry with Flight Lieutenants Khalil Ahmad as No 2 and Parvaiz Mehdi Qureshi as No 3 were sent on an air-to-ground mission with rockets and guns to the Chaugacha area. After carrying out three attacks, though low on fuel, the leader decided to carry out a fourth attack. While he was in a dive, No 2 called the leader that two Gnats were behind him. Chaudhry broke into the Gnats and even tried to fire at one. His No 2 called again to warn the leader that two more Gnats were pursuing him. Chaudhry gave a call to disengage but when he looked around he could not spot his No 2 but saw his No 3 who had ejected after getting shot by the enemy fighter. No 2 had also ejected at the same time. Both landed in Pakistan territory but were picked up by Mukhti Bahini who handed them to India as prisoners of war. In the absence of radar cover helicopter could not reach in time to rescue them. Flight Lieutenant Parvaiz Mehdi Qureshi later reached the rank of Air Chief Marshal and commanded the PAF as Chief of Air Staff from November 1997 to November 2000. He can proudly say, "*Girtay hain shehswar he maidan e jang main.*"

The High Command finally decided to attack India in the West. The flash message which was sent to all bases at 1735 hours on 3rd

December 1971 was: "As of this evening Pakistan is at full scale war with India. Phase Three is declared with immediate effect." This message must have evoked playful laughter in No 14 Squadron as they were already fighting the war since March 71.

Three Days of Fury

On the night of 3 December, in retaliation to PAF's attack in the west, the IAF Canberras attacked Tejgaon airfield five times but no damage was done. The IAF pilots were happy to off-load their bombs all round the airfield, as they did during 1965 war. Around 0730 hours on 4 December, Wing Commander S M Ahmad and his No 2 and Flying Officer Rashidi landed in thick of the battle with 4 Hunters and Migs-21s. In the ensuing combat Wing Commander S M Ahmad was shot down by a Hunter. He ejected 5 miles from the Kurmitola airfield. He was never found. Flying Officer Rashidi was able to extricate himself from the remaining Hunters. At same time Squadron Leader Javed Afzaal and Flight Lieutenant Saeed Afzal Khan were in battle with 3 Hunters close by. Both pilots shot down one Hunter each in that engagement. However Flight Lieutenant Saeed was shot down and ejected but his fate has never been known; most likely he was killed by the rebels.

It was at that time Flight Lieutenant Schames-ul-Haq and Flying Officer Mehmood Gul got airborne and soon after they intercepted 2 Su-7s three miles from Dacca. Flight Lieutenant Schames-ul-Haq fired at a Su-7 scoring a hit on the right wing but the pilot pulled away with use of after burner. Flight Lieutenants Schames-ul-Haq and Gul were again scrambled to intercept 2 Hunters which were heading to attack the runway. Schames-ul-Haq shot down one Hunter but his missile missed the second, who was lucky to get away.

The honours for the greatest battle go to two budding fighter pilots, Flying Officer Shams-ul-Haq and his No 2, Flying Officer Shamshad. They were scrambled around mid day and when they had barely retracted their under carriages they were fired upon with rockets by 2 Su-7s. Shams-ul-Haq turned into them and shot at one of them which started to smoke as it sped away. After that Shams and his No 2 were directed to Kurmitola where Shams engaged with a Hunter and shot it down. Its pilot ejected and was whisked away to safety by the Mukti Bahini. While Shamshad came back to land, Shams spotted an aircraft over Tejgaon. He chased it and fired a missile at close range that went straight into Hunter's tail pipe, blowing it up. The IAF pilot was lucky to eject and that scene was also witnessed with joy by all around the airfield. At that stage Shams was attacked by 4 MiG-21s. Shams demonstrated mastery over his Sabre by doing excellent defensive manoeuvring with maximum rate turns at tree top level around Dhaka TV tower. The MiG-21 pilots were unable to shoot him and when low on fuel they called off the fight and headed back home. That was the finest hour of our young pilot Shams and that of No 14 Squadron.

In the afternoon, Squadron Leader Dilawar Hussain and Flying Officer Sajjad Noor were scrambled to intercept 4 Hunters south of the airfield. Dilawar shot down a Hunter piloted by Flight Lieutenant Kenneth Tremenheere. At the same time Flying Officer Sajjad was also shot down by a Hunter aircraft. Both IAF and PAF pilots ejected safely and were rescued by the same PAF helicopter.

On 5 December IAF continued attacks but their raids were warded off. In one napalm bomb attack on of the airmen's dining hall, 5 airmen lost their lives. On 6 December extensive support to the army was provided. Soon after Dilawar's formation

landed, 4 MiG-21s each carrying 2 bombs attacked the runway from high level and made four craters. Thereafter, frequent attacks rendered runway repair ineffective. With the runway totally out of commission and no let up by the IAF in their attacks on the runway, No 14 Squadron called it a day in East Pakistan. No 14 Squadron, fondly known as Tail Choppers, evened the score at 5 aircraft downed while fighting against 10 combat squadrons of the IAF. Our valiant anti-aircraft artillery gunners shot 9 IAF aircraft and deserve the highest tribute for their exceptional performance during the war. Air Marshal Rahim Khan, the Chief of the Air Staff congratulated the pilots, airmen and support staff on their valour in performing their duties. He stopped further flying from Dhaka and issued orders for repatriation of No 14 Squadron to West Pakistan, via Burma, to continue their battle from West. They wrote their own history of fighting with spirit and audacity against enemy 10 times their size. Their performance will always be a source of inspiration to budding fighter pilots of the PAF.

While I was writing about air war in East Pakistan my grandson Shan Ali Ghalib read the draft of Air War by No 14 Squadron - 'The Tail Choppers'. He was so enthused with the spirit and audacity of the air warriors that he wrote the following ballad to eulogise their exploits:

Ballad of the Tail Choppers

By the honour of my soil, I am ever ready to soar
To fly the cold, dark night, to reach heaven's very door!
I'll tear apart this fool, who has dared challenge me,
Watch me dominate oh world! Watch my adventures become lore!

What's that you say? You have ten to my one?
The horizon is mine, there is nowhere to run!
Your fear is palpable, even at this altitude,
Little do you realize: I've already won!

Your faith in your numbers, you advance,
From my front, from my rear, you bore me with this dance!
Do you fancy yourself a gambling man?
The odds are on Shams in this game of chance.

The audacity of my spirit both awes and confounds
The ferocity of my attack overwhelms and surrounds,
This present age bears witness, to my chivalry and my blood,
The skies clamour 'No guts no glory' as my battle-cry resounds.

War in the Western Wing

The theory of defence of East Pakistan based on strategy that an attack on East Pakistan from India would automatically mean attack on Pakistan as a whole was though chivalrous but not credible in our case. For that strategy to have any credence there was a need for at least two to one ratio of forces in the Western Wing vis-à-vis India and to have enough forces in East Wing for adequate defensive posture with an aim to ensure that the centre of gravity of war remains in the West. Since that was not possible for us to afford such a large force, therefore advocating such a theory was not valid. It only lulled us to base our defence on an inaccurate assumption. East Pakistan was not attacked by India in 1965 War due to their perceived threat of China coming down on the side Pakistan. That also further strengthened our

faith in the above mentioned theory. It was no doubt impossible task to defend East Pakistan with inadequate resources, operating in a sea of hostility, and an enemy ten times our size and resources located in the middle of the two Wings.

Ipso facto, the academic question was what could the government have done to safeguard the integrity of our country without adequate resources to have credible defence for both wings? We did try to seek security through joining SEATO and CENTO but these pacts were meant against China and Russia respectively. The only advantage we gained was availability of military aid to build our armed forces with modern equipment that we could never have been able to afford from own resources. However the negative fall out of joining these pacts was that Russia helped India to cut Pakistan in half in 1971. Unfortunately the answer to the question as to what could we do to safeguard our integrity came too late – 'the nuclear deterrent.' The real test of the above-mentioned dubious concept came under test when India launched full scale attack on many fronts on 21st November 1971. The High Command in GHQ was totally paralyzed with the Catch 22 situation. The dilemma was if war was started in the west against a well prepared enemy, the odds for achieving any favourable results were minimal and besides it was not going to be helpful to the outcome in East Pakistan because the situation there had reached a point of no return. On the contrary, if no action was taken we would be hanging our heads in shame for centuries to come. This caused paralytic indecision in the High Command that lingered on till Air Marshal Rahim Khan, Commander-in-Chief of Pakistan Air Force, together with a few army Generals and field Commanders forced the issue in favour of opening the front in the West. Thus the government declared war on 3rd December 1971 almost after 15 crucial days of remaining in the limbo. The concept of defending every inch of the border, by General A A K Niazi, the

Commander of the Armed Forces in Eastern Command, was unrealistic to a fault. He failed to pay attention to the advice of the commanders to make a strategic retreat to consolidate positions around Dhaka. That way, he could have made greater use of resources, especially with additional two infantry divisions of army that were added to his force six months earlier, and also shorter lines of communications through the hostile population would have been extremely helpful. The Indian army was quite happy to tie down our forces at the border with their small holding forces and transporting majority of their forces by helicopters or through the gaps of our army's well entrenched positions to bypass our forces at the border. No doubt they had the luxury of satellite photographs provided to them by their supporters. Our army units everywhere fought with unsurpassed bravery and their valour will be remembered in history with honour and pride. Some units kept on fighting even after the ignominious surrender on 16th December 1971.

Air War in the West

When India launched an aggression in East Pakistan on 21st November 1971 the PAF had 295 operational aircraft as against IAF's 1,025 aircraft excluding 175 fighters in reserve. The PAF force was composed of F-6s, F-86Es, Mirage-IIIs, and B-57s, whereas IAF front line aircraft were: Su-7s, Canberras, MiG-21s, HF-24s, Mysteres, Gnats and Hunters, a formidable combination of fighters and bombers. The deficiency of infrastructure in the PAF, as observed during 1965 War had been paid considerable attention. The number of operational airfields was doubled for adequate dispersal. All the airfields had underground fuel storage, and command and communications were also housed in underground safe places. Concrete pens were provided on all airfields and ammunition was well dispersed. The Air Defence

environment could only be improved marginally for lack of foreign exchange. In spite of embargo on spare parts by Americans, even for defensive equipment, the two high powered long range radars were somehow kept in serviceable condition. Since 1965 War 4 additional medium range (one withdrawn from East Pakistan due to security reasons) and 5 low looking radars were added. With these radars PAF could get approximately 25% high level coverage of vital areas and about 7% low level coverage. However, there were serious gaps in Kashmir area and absolutely no coverage south of Multan between Sukhur and Hyderabad. The air defence environment was far from adequate to fight a major war with the enemy which was well prepared on all fronts. The PAF's naval support capability was marginal as enough resources had not been allocated for dedicated anti-shipping weaponry.

The PAF Operational Plan was totally geared up to the Army's major thrust in the vital area. The Air Chief considered this dedication of total effort by the PAF to Army's thrust a lynchpin to success or failure of the Army that would in all likelihood determine the fate of Pakistan. Even though such an effort was most likely to result in loss of about one third of our total aircraft and pilots over a period of about 10 days, but was considered acceptable for success of the main thrust. This operational plan had the whole hearted support of senior commanders and staff officers of Air Force. When the war was declared on 3rd December 1971, the PAF was all fired up for action to defend its Fatherland.

The air war in the west started on 3rd December 1971. On that day the PAF attacked 13 Indian air bases and 2 radar stations, with F-86s, F-104s, Mirages, T-33s, and B-57s. Srinagar airfield was also attacked by C-130s with bombs. The IAF retaliated with a large force of Canberras at night and with

Hunters and Su-7s during day time. They attacked all air bases including satellites and emergency landing grounds. The damage caused was only a few craters which were quickly repaired but no aircraft was lost during these attacks. On the other hand IAF lost many aircraft in combat and ground fire because the PAF was ready for the retaliatory response, waiting for them with combat air patrols over every base. The Hunter was no match for our aircraft in combat and Su-7 presented a huge target when the enemy pilots decided to fight; it also presented a big target for anti aircraft artillery. On the whole the price paid by the IAF was very high gaining no worth while results. The IAF kept up this pressure ie, 4th, 5th and 6th December 1971. On 7th December the PAF struck back but IAF had lost heart and avoided air combat, due to heavy casualties during their earlier attempts while carrying counter air operations. The PAF did it again ie, repeat of 1965 forcing the IAF on defensive. Since IAF could not destroy the PAF with counter air operations they switched their tactics to mounting raids on cities and lines of communications. The IAF however carried on attacks on tactical and strategic targets. Only on one satellite airfield was the IAF able to destroy 5 F-86 aircraft that were parked outside the pens and were being refuelled. This loss was due to negligence of the base for not following the proper procedure of keeping the aircraft in pens while refuelling in between sorties.

After ensuring that the IAF was on the defensive, the PAF High Command decided to hold back a major part of the force to conserve its effort to support the strategic thrust under General Tikka Khan that had been planned jointly, and was going to be very crucial to the outcome of the war. That was the reason PAF was conserving its strength and not launching larger number of combat air patrols over cities and other populated areas along the border. The PAF has been criticized for not defending the cities as it did during 1965 War.

Lahore, Sialkot and other small cities are situated close to border and IAF could sneak in at low level under our radar cover to reach in 3 to 4 minutes where as our reaction time was 6 to 8 minutes. Keeping combat air patrols along the border at all times was the obvious answer but would have depleted the availability of the force when the final crucial thrust was going to be launched. The PAF was therefore conserving the major portion of the force for the main thrust. The PAF had no adequate answer to night raids by Canberras and Su-7s. F-104 and Mirage aircraft could not pick up Indian bombers at low altitude for lack of suitable look-down radar on board the aircraft. On night of 3/4 December IAF carried out 15 night raids by Canberra bombers on Sargodha, Mianwali, Murid, Chander, Rahwali and Masroor airfields. On all airfields there were minor damages of no real consequence. The Indian bomber raids continued on different targets except attacks on Masroor and Faisal (Drigh Road) air bases. Their aim was to thwart PAF capability in this sector from supporting their ground forces when the Indian army's major attack was to be launched in Chor-Nagarparkar sector to cut Karachi from rest of the country, certainly a dangerous plan. The Indian Canberra/Su-7 bombing raids did inconsequential disruption in the PAF operations. Damage to runways and taxi tracks was very speedily repaired and morale of the personnel remained very high. The Indians however had a rewarding success on 5/6 night when a valuable Elint RB-57 was destroyed in the hangar undergoing maintenance. The Indians also lost two Canberras, one on 4/5 night in Sargodha area, shot down by Flight Lieutenant Naeem Ata, with a missile in a Mirage aircraft. The second Canberra was shot down by Sargodha ack-ack gunners on 5/6 night. Our B-57 raids on Indian targets continued till cease fire.

On 4th December when PAF Chief visited GHQ, he was informed that No18 Division was cleared to attack Ramgarh and after capturing it, make a dash for Jaiselmer. The Air Chief was

surprised and shocked because the Division could not be provided with air cover because it was not part of the plan and therefore Jacobabad airfield had not been activated. There were no PAF aircraft within 250 miles to come to the aid of the division. Only B-57s and C-130 transport aircraft could reach the battle area whereas IAF had 3 bases around Jaiselmer. Launching such an attack without proper air support and lack of assessment of the reality on the ground was nothing but irrational exuberance on the part of one of the Brigade Commanders. The Brigade got lost in the desert, ran out of fuel, ammunition and water; and was bogged down. 4 Hunters had a field day of target practice on 5th and 6th December and destroyed most of the Pakistani tanks. The Division withdrew its force and on 7th December Major General Hamid took over the command of the ill-fated Division.

A very serious situation developed in Chor-Nagarparkar sector when the enemy penetrated on four axes, heading towards Hyderabad as their first target with an aim to subsequently cut north-south rail and road leading to Karachi. PAF Base Masroor sprang to the occasion and mounted attacks with B-57s, F-86s and T-33s. Top cover was provided by F-86 and F-104 aircraft. I being Sector Air Defence Commander witnessed the professionalism of our pilots and commanders. The air attacks were so effective that Indian trains were destroyed, thus choking the supply support for their forces. In this operation Masroor-based pilots claimed 20 tanks, 63 vehicles, 5 trains, 3 bulk fuel storage and ammunition dumps. In addition the PAF pilots shot down 3 enemy aircraft in air combat. The enemy was forced to make a hasty retreat. It was a very thrilling and successful operation carried by the Joint Operations Centre, PAF Masroor and Sector Operations Centre South. It was exceptional performance led by Air Commodore Nazir ('Bill') Latif, the exuberant Base Commander, and high spirited Group Captain

Wiqar Azim and his pilots and men who rose to the occasion to thwart the enemy's dangerous design.

Air Support to Navy

The Pak Navy was never given adequate budgetary support to be able to perform its war time role in East as well as West Pakistan. Perhaps due to paucity of financial resources, especially the foreign exchange component that navy required, it could not get the budget to equip itself with weapon systems required to perform its task. Consequently it had to lean on PAF to help her out. Unfortunately, the PAF was also not allotted additional budget to purchase specialized maritime aircraft and weapons required to support naval operations. The PAF could only provide day time strike support against ships at sea with conventional bombs, rockets and guns along with day time visual maritime recce with C-130s and PIA aircraft. The PAF had absolutely no capability to acquire and attack targets in the sea at night. The limitations were clearly defined and documented during joint exercises prior to war. However during the war the very first mission demanded by the Maritime Headquarters was to launch a night strike against a ship 270 miles out at sea. Unfortunately the Navy lost two ships on the second night of the war during attack by two OSA missile boats. One of the OSA boats attacked Karachi harbour that set the oil tanks on fire which burnt for many days. These were successful attacks by the Indian Navy. Our whole hearted sympathies were with the PN. Realizing the Navy's helplessness to cope with the threat the PAF started armed reconnaissance with B-57s and F-86s at night to search and destroy the Indian OSA missile boats. This was to boost the morale of the PN but had no practical value; however in retaliation to the harbour attack by Indian Navy, PAF carried out night attack

on Okha harbour, the home base of OSA boats, on 5/6 night with B-57 aircraft setting fuel tanks on fire. The fire could be seen as far as 60 miles out. A few days later, 2 F-86s reported 2 ships near Cape Monze. The MHQ confirmed that there were no friendly ships in the area and cleared the pilots for attack. After first attack it was found out that those were our own ships and therefore further attacks were stopped by MHQ. On 10 December F-104 piloted by Flight Lieutenant Iqbal shot down Indian Navy Alizé aircraft. Up to cease fire the PAF flew 35 missions on B-57, F-86, and T-33 aircraft in support of Pak Navy and in addition 127 sorties for visual reconnaissance were also flown.

Cease Fire

The ill-fated major thrust was not launched, though pursued spiritedly by the Air Chief and many Generals from within the army. I presume the Army High Command took a realistic view not to gamble at this late stage and accepted the cease fire. The cease fire took place on 16th December 1971. It was an ignominious day for Pakistan because we lost what we inherited in 1947. This was the result of short sightedness of our leaders which caused internecine war. The enemy seized upon this opportunity to further put fuel on fire of hatred among us. Moreover we were not ready to pay the high price for resources required for defence for two halves of our country; and were also not prepared to pay the ultimate price in terms of human lives. The question is who can we blame for this debacle? The simple answer is no one but us. But have we learnt the lesson? It does not appear that we have. However the redeeming factor is that in the history of nations, there have been selfless men who rose to the occasion and took control of the situation. The names of Mao Zedong of China, General Charles De Gaulle of France, Winston

Churchill of England, Marshal Stalin of Russia and Mustafa Kemal Ataturk of Turkey are the shining examples of a few stalwarts in the pages of recent history.

Comparison Air Combat Losses

In 1971 War the PAF lost 22 aircraft on western front and 5 F-86s on the eastern front. The F-86s that survived on eastern front were later damaged by PAF themselves, when Dhaka airfield became unusable. We also lost a total of 15 brave crew. We destroyed 60 IAF aircraft, of these 18 were shot down in air combat, 3 on the ground and 36 were shot down by ack-ack gunners. (Details at Appendix 'A)

Post Script

I did not write any details of air war in northern sector as I did not have personal knowledge about that war and therefore confined myself to events in southern sector. However I wrote about air war in East Pakistan because it was fascinating to me how a handicapped David fought with overwhelmingly powerful Goliath. For India the Eastern Pakistan was an easy target and a prelude to bigger prize that was West Pakistan. Undoubtedly she needed total backing of big international players for that venture. I have however penned my views on the outcome of the war and the confusion in thinking at governmental and army command levels.

11
In Senior Positions

Picking the Pieces

I went out of the Operations Centre for the first time since the outbreak of the war on 17th December 1971. Since I did not have any one to replace me during shifts, I decided to stay in the operations room at all times. I had to be on duty about 21 hours a day. I was only sleeping about two to three hours form 12:15 AM to 2:30 AM; that was approximately the lull period when Indian Canberra bombers would head for their homes and the new wave would take off from the southern bases. When the cease fire was declared, nearly every one in the operations rooms wept. I realized that since the men did not have the full picture of pre-war events that led to war, and state of our armed force as a result of paucity of funds, there was bound to be reaction amongst the airmen. I therefore decided to gather all the staff under my command for a briefing on the disturbing results of war in East Pakistan. I briefed them about the difficult period between the two wars ie, 1965 and 1971 when all support from our allies was cut off and the financial difficulties we faced to update our equipment. I talked about shortages of manpower created due to East Pakistani airmen laid off work. I also talked about the inadequacy of our armed forces

especially the air element where our one squadron was pitched against 10 squadrons of the enemy. I explained to them we had done well in West Pakistan but that became inconsequential because we lost half the country. Thereafter, I invited questions regarding war and it's out come. The men asked very pertinent questions and I answered those to their satisfaction. At the end I told them that all the men and officers under my command have performed their duties exceptionally well and I felt proud of them. I told them that henceforth I did not want any adverse sentiments to be aired against the armed forces high command. I thought the men understood my message and felt relaxed. I was not wrong in my assumption regarding the depth of feelings generated by the loss of East Pakistan and its possible consequences. The airmen on most bases went on strike and stopped working and eating in the messes. The airmen under my command however did not take part in the strike and continued to work normally and kept eating in the mess in spite of pressure from their colleagues from other trades on the base. I would like to point out that any strike or instability in the Units, Bases, or Commands was due to failure of Command at all levels. Base Commander Korangi Creek was Group Captain Mubarak. He was unable to handle the situation and decided to confine himself to his residence. I went to his house to take him around the base. He was reluctant but I forced him to accompany me in my jeep. I told him that the airmen were angry regarding the outcome of the war but were not violent. Since he was unable to control the situation he was posted out and Group Captain Zaki Butt was posted in January 1972 to sort out the situation. He discussed with me and I told him what I did next day after the war. He called airmen in groups and gave a very touching lecture to them about the genesis of the events that led to creation of Pakistan and the sacrifices that were made to get our country. He

talked about the reasons why we lost East Pakistan. He restored the normal condition on the base in about three weeks.

Command of Korangi Creek

Group Captain Zaki Butt was posted back to Air Headquarters in January 1972 and I was posted as Base Commander in addition to being Sector Air Defence Commander South. PAF Base Korangi Creek is a technical training base where airmen of technical trade are trained at this base. The College of Aeronautical Engineering, (to train engineering officers for the PAF, Pak Army, Pak Navy and PIA) was also located here. It was an independent institution and the base only provided facilities for running the college. It was a very high standard college affiliated to the University of Karachi. The Commandant of the college was a Group Captain who was a highly qualified engineer with a lot of experience of working on the bases. However he developed a wrong notion, some times during his career that engineering officers being highly qualified should be commanders in the air and not uneducated pilots. When I got that report confirmed from base intelligence officer and from a few students I was alarmed. I discussed the matter with Air Secretary Group Captain Zafar Mehmood who had come to visit my base. He was shocked. He asked me to propose a solution to the problem. I told him to either change the Commandant or put the college under my administrative control. The Commandant being a qualified officer, I recommended the latter course of action. Since the Air Secretary had accompanied the Chief during his visit to southern bases, he discussed with him the same day at Drigh Road Base. That very evening the letter was issued placing the College under the administrative control of the Base Commander. Next day I called the Commandant who came straight away to my office, instead of coming as per his old habit, in his own time. I discussed

with him the wrong notion of PAF Command structure, which he was carelessly suggesting to young trainees. I told him to stop propagating wrong ideas to students and put forward the correct role of every branch of service in the PAF. He apologized for unconsciously talking about it in some gathering. That was sorted out and possible future problem was nipped in the bud. On the whole the base was run very well by my predecessor Group Captain Mubarak. The discipline was good and messes served good food and were kept clean. I paid a lot of attention to games and welfare activities. Mrs Shamim organized the industrial home and set up teaching classes with qualified teachers. It was a great success; wives of airmen and civilian employs started their own boutiques. The measures taken in the industrial home improved quality of life for those ladies who took keen interest in learning various arts and crafts and making further use of their newly acquired skills.

Towards the end of 1971, I visited PAF Base Malir to call on Group Captain Sikander the Base Commander. While I was with him he received a letter issued by AHQ signed by Air Marshal Rahim Khan in which he cast himself as the person who was responsible in bringing Mr Bhutto to power. It may well have been true but putting that in writing and circulating it to all PAF Bases was potentially disastrous for him, besides being politically incorrect. After going through the letter we both came to the conclusion that Air Marshal A Rahim Khan's days were numbered as Commander-in-Chief of the PAF. Our assessment was correct and the Air Chief, along with the Army Chief General Gul Hasan, who also had a hand in elevating Mr Bhutto to power, were made to resign from their services in March 1972 in a melodramatic and farcical manner. By the way, all three were so-called friends! Since the game of power does not tolerate sharing of power, the new leader's first priority is to get rid of people who had been his close supporters and responsible in helping him to

the top position. That has been the pattern time after time throughout the ages. It has been considered essential for the new leader, so that the associates do not demand their pound of flesh in sharing power. The lesson for the supporters therefore is very clear: Beware of the consequences!

A Gift from Providence

We had decided to live in Karachi after my retirement. We had saved enough money during my tenure of posting in Jordan for that very purpose. Also, I had one square of prime agricultural land, gifted to me with the award of Sitar-e-Jurat for meritorious services rendered during 1965 war with India. That was to serve as a back up if additional finances were needed. I had a plot of land in Phase VI in Defence Housing Society (DHS) Karachi. Although it was situated in prime location but the development of the area would take a few years. Since we were in Karachi it was a good opportunity to undertake this important venture of our life. Therefore I applied to DHS Karachi for change of location of the plot. DHS very kindly did the needful and I was allotted a well located plot in Clifton area. I got the plot registered, and engaged an architect for planning the house. While we were engaged in planning, I received a phone call from Air Vice Marshal Yousaf, Additional Secretary Ministry of Defence, that DHS had made a blunder by double allotment of the plot to me. The plot was already allotted to an inspector of police for his excellent services rendered to the society. The Air Vice Marshal enquired that though I had got the plot registered in my name, would I agree if the plot was returned to DHS to be given back to the original allotee and in lieu I would be allotted another plot. I told him at that very moment I would certainly return the plot so that it is returned to its rightful owner. I told him that it was my moral duty

to do so. He thanked me for getting the DHS out of the awkward position. The DHS allotted me another 2,000 square yards plot in Phase-III at the beginning of Gizri Boulevard. Fortunately, its location was far better than the one I had returned. We built our house on half the plot. No sooner it was completed than it was rented out to an educated young man, a Director of CDA who assured us that it was for his personal use. In fact it was a shock to my wife when she learnt that it was being used as Rest and Recreation (R and R) for Jam Sahib's friends! She decided to sell the house and not live in it. Luckily our house, along with a few other plots, was converted into a commercial area. It was a gift from Providence who has His own way of rewarding. That placed us on a sound financial footing.

The residence of Base Commander Korangi Creek was located on the beach. It was a very old house but the location was very picturesque; sitting out side in the lawn in the evening and walking in the mornings on holidays on the beach were pleasurable pastimes. Looking back I would say that location-wise the house at Korangi Creek was the best house we lived in through out our stay in the PAF. After about a years stay I was posted out to PAF Base Masroor (old name Mauripur) in February 1973. During my stay at the Korangi I had learnt a lot regarding technical training of airmen and officers. On the whole it was a very valuable experience for my career.

Command of Masroor Air Base

I took over Masroor Air Base in February 1973. Successfully commanding a fighter base is a dream of a fighter pilot, and the last step for further advancements in the PAF. My predecessor was posted out within less than a year. To explain his premature posting out he spread a rumour that since the Chief of the Air

Staff was 'Ahmadi' that was why he was posted out and replaced by Group Captain Shamim, indirectly insinuating that I was also Ahmadi. That sort of untruth, being spread by an officer, who overtly demonstrated being a very pious individual, was rather strange. He should have realized that in the PAF you are judged by the work output and not by any other consideration. Masroor Base is the largest and one of the oldest air bases in the PAF. It had a very large inventory of different types of aircraft. No 32 Fighter Wing had three F-86 Fighter Squadrons, a B-57 bomber Squadron, a training squadron equipped with T-33 aircraft and Fighter Leader's School with F-86 aircraft. It also had other big units like Record Office responsible for postings, promotions and retirements of airmen; PAF Hospital and many other smaller independent units over which the base either had administrative control or provided facilities. In fact the base was like a mini city and therefore administratively very demanding.

I read the previous year's Inspectorate's report and that was unflattering. The flight safety record was below the standard; the serviceability rate of aircraft was low and discipline of officers and men left much to be desired. Audit objections were much more than normal. Inspectorate visits every year and spend two weeks to one month on a base and submits a detailed report on all activities highlighting achievements as well as weak areas and concludes with their recommendations. The base has to sort out all weaknesses and take action on the recommendations within three months to get ready for the yearly inspection by the Chief of Air Staff (CAS). A base that follows the instructions of the Inspectorate would do well during the inspection by the CAS. The administration of the base was the weakest area as pointed by the Inspectorate during their annual inspection. AHQ had already posted in an experienced Officer Commanding Administration Wing and also old staff was replaced with new. I tasked the OC Administration Wing, Wing

Commander Riaz to resolve, all the points raised by Inspectorate within two months; that was done to my satisfaction. The next area to be sorted out was discipline. I called all OC Wings and independent units and told them that from then on I would hold them responsible for any transgression of discipline of officers and men under their commands. They must ensure every one was properly dressed, had hair cuts according to regulations, report to duty on time, absence without leave was not to be tolerated and many other areas of discipline. I emphasized to all commanders that they must ensure their non-commissioned officers (NCOs) took active part in establishing proper discipline at grass roots level. I also made clear to all commanders that any application submitted by their officers and men would only be acceptable to me if it was endorsed as either recommended or not recommended by the forwarding officer. I would not entertain an application with remarks 'forwarded.' I emphasized that the buck stops, at every level of command for decision making. The talk had sound effect and I could see new vigour infused at the base. It was brought to my notice by field intelligence liaison unit that an airman was acting like a 'don' at the base. When ever given punishment he was treated as a special person. He would not obey commands during drill parade and the NCOs in-charge were unable to make him follow orders. Also special food from airmen mess was sent to him. That of course was totally unacceptable to me. I could dismiss him through court-martial but in my opinion that was not the best answer in such a case in the long run. I told the concerned squadron commander to remand the case to me next time he misbehaved. It was not very long before he was brought before me. I awarded him 30 days detention in the cell and the punishment was to be carried out in Army cell at Malir Cantonment. I saw a mild smirk on the face of the airman. He was promptly shifted to Malir in the Army cell. Next day when he was lined up for parade he started misbehaving by not

responding to commands given by the army NCO in-charge. The NCO informed the Adjutant who decided to handle the case himself. He came out and gave him the order for double march. The airman did not respond to the order and instead started walking. The officer ordered him to halt and took out his revolver. The airman started running. After about 10 days he sent a massage that he would behave properly and requested repatriation to Masroor Base. I refused to accept his request and after completing 30 days punishment he was sent back to the base, a totally changed person. He became most obedient and well behaved airman on the base. Instead of discharging him from service I decided to let him carry on in the service. That incident also had a salutary effect regarding discipline on the base. I starting going round the base early in the morning especially to the flight lines and workshops and occasionally would stop to talk to men.

My main thrust was to emphasize to every one that the base had an unsatisfactory flight safety record because aircraft servicing was not up to the mark. We all therefore need to work hard, pay attention to details so that we completed the flying task given to our base with safety. I told them we need to have a burning desire to attain our lofty goal of winning the flight safety trophy and thereby become the No 1 Base in the PAF. My talks had a salutary effect in that the safety record showed improvement and the base attained the second position in 1973. A Base Commander is able to take care of his office work in no more than two to three hours a day. He therefore needs to utilize his remaining time in supervision of the base. The goals are achieved by motivating each and every person in the organization to work for a challenging goal and to willingly and enthusiastically adopt that as his own goal. The goal on our base was 'operational efficiency with safety'. In 1974 we started off well in that we were ahead of every flying base on points for

flighty safety. Some time during later part of the year we lost some points due to negligence of NCO of armament trade. I talked to airmen of the concerned squadron as well as other squadrons that the error had put us in a critical position and therefore we had no more leeway for any further mistakes. The personnel of the squadron were so annoyed with the NCO that they stopped talking to him placing him in an awkward position in the squadron. When a leader demands high standards of work he needs to pay attention to welfare of bachelor as well as married men under his command. The OC Administration Wing improved the cleanliness of the living areas and the messes. He organized entertainment on regular basis for the men. He improved the standard of the local market and the contractor of the local cinema was told to arrange latest movies for exhibition. Those efforts by the admin staff were very well appreciated by the men on the base. Lot of attention was also paid to sports activities and we had considerable success in inter-base competitions.

The local branch of Pakistan Air Force Women's Association (PAFWA) at the base was infused with new vigour and new ideas by Mrs Tahira Shamim. New instructors were engaged as teachers on voluntary basis from amongst talented wives of officers and men and also from outside the base for special arts or craft. It became a very active and thriving organization and was very much appreciated by airmen and civilians on the base. Many potentially talented ladies and their daughters benefited immensely. With passage of time the Industrial Home started earning considerable money by selling their products in the city and the profit was channelled for welfare of the needy. PAFWA started scholarships for the talented students and for those whose parents were unable to pay for schooling of their children. The most important spin-off of

the organization was that I started getting information concerning the problems and difficulties the airmen were facing at the base and generally in their lives. We people due to cultural reasons are very reluctant to talk about our personal affairs to an outsider. However in a very homely and private atmosphere with someone who was ready to listen to their problems the ladies would open up. Many of the problems were taken care of there and then and those that were outside the purview of PAFWA were forwarded to the Base Administration for help or further action. 1973 was another year of unrest for the PAF.

The Infamous Conspiracy

In March, a few mid-level Army Officers and four PAF officers were arrested for planning to overthrow the legitimate government. The focus of their anger was the role played by senior military officers and the politicians in the ignominious secession of East Pakistan. They were going to execute their ill-conceived and impracticable plan in April. All of them were very intelligent officers who were doing well and had good chance to reach high places in their respective services. How could mid level officers, even though they had high IQ, expect to succeed baffles imagination when it is logically analysed in context of the Pakistan Army's command structure? Perhaps idealistic approach to life may have been the reason for such an absurd conception. All one can say is that man is only fallible; after all the best of the best fell for the proverbial apple! During last week of March the Provost Marshal and a few commandos landed at my base just after midnight to arrest one of the four officers involved in organizing a coup against the government. He was the Squadron Commander of an F-86 squadron at my base. The arresting party came to my residence to inform me and to take

me along with them to arrest the officer at his house. The party went over to the house of the officer, knocked at the door and when the officer came out he was arrested. He did not put up any resistance. When he saw the Provost Marshal and the armed commandos he realised the party was over. He was taken away in a C-130 aircraft. Similarly, the remaining three were arrested from other places. The investigations were started by the Director of Air Intelligence (DAI), and his staff and a few officers associated with him. As the investigations progressed more and more officers were added to the list of those allegedly involved in the venture. The expanded list no doubt had a few who were sympathetic to the risky venture, but the others were arrested simply for being in the company of guilty officers and their associates. I may point out that officers often get together in the Officers' Mess, in some ones room, and indulge in all sorts of frivolous talk which cannot be taken seriously.

The DAI saw either a great opening for advancement in his career, or was too naive to understand the wider implication of his action of enlarging the number of allegedly guilty officers. The Air Chief seemed to have too much faith in the DAI's ability and perhaps that may be the reason for not appointing an oversight committee to monitor his destructive approach of widening the net. During that time the country was also going through a wave of anti-Qadiani sentiments, and the Air Chief being a Qadiani, the officers may have been talking against him and that was taken as being anti-government stance and therefore larger numbers of arrests were made for being guilty by association. There was an interesting case when two officers, one of them from my base, had a meeting with the leader of PAF coup team at 'Go Go' restaurant near Drigh Road base for briefing for the 'D' day of the coup. The leader told one of the officers belonging to my base to go to Base Commander and ask

him to hand over the command to him. The officer asked the leader in case the Base Commander refuses to do so what should be the course of action in that situation. The leader told him that in such a case, he was to shoot the Base Commander and take over the base. Interestingly the coup leader was a colleague and a friend. Of course the empirical principle that in the game of power and politics is that there are no friends or relations. A few senior officers expressed their views that the investigation should be limited to four officers, and the case be handed over to the Army for joint trial along with the army officers involved in the coup at Attock Fort. The Air Chief however decided to hold a separate trial at PAF Badaber and made it freely accessible to public and media. When the Court Martial started I was 8th or 9th witness. The court was adjourned for the day after I had completed half the statement. In the evening I was invited by the DAI to meet him at his residence. During our discourse he tried to persuade me to make a few changes in my statement the following day as it was incongruous with the direction of the case. I refused to oblige him. He pleaded with me to make changes in my statement in the wider interest of PAF as well as Pakistan. I refused to agree to make any changes in my statement and after about an hour of his pleading and cajoling I took leave to go to my room in the officer's mess to rest. Next day at the trial I continued with my statement. As soon as I concluded, the eminent defending attorney Mr Anwar went up to the President of the Court and said, "This is the first witness who has told the truth. He has restored our confidence in the officers' corps of the PAF." I did not realise at that time that due to my factual statement a few uninvolved officers got off the hook and many of the officers, who appeared as witnesses following me, became courageous enough to tell the correct version of the events.

I flew back to Masroor the same evening. I told Tahira the whole story of pressure on me to give an untruthful statement to the court. She agreed with me that I had done the right thing. I also told her that though I had been less than a year and half at the base, I was likely to be posted out to some non-descript post. She said, "We will cross that bridge when it comes." While the trial was in progress, on a weekend, the President of the Court Martial, Air Vice Marshal Nawaz, flew over to my base and called on me. He discussed with me my statement and enquired if I might have forgotten the correct chain of events on the base, in which case the court could recall me to change my statement. I told the Air Vice Marshal that what I stated was the truth and the whole truth and my OC Flying Wing, Wing Commander Shabbir Hussain was a witness to all the events. He went away having cleared himself of the misgivings that the DAI may have raised.

The Court Martial concluded with four primary suspects found guilty; they were awarded imprisonment. Ten others, who were found not guilty for want of credible evidence but considered to be involved in conspiracy in any manner, were retired with the approval of the Prime Minister. By that time the whole affair had become so highly politicised by the media, due to religious undertones, that the Air Chief was advised to reinstate the ten retired offices. Air Marshal Zafar Chaudhry did not agree to reverse the decision while he was in command but instead took the honourable course and tendered his resignation. It was accepted by the Prime Minister. He was replaced by Air Vice Marshal Zulfiqar Ali Khan. It was no doubt a sad end to a brilliant career and meritorious services rendered by Air Marshal Zafar Chaudhry through out his service in the PAF. Even though he was preoccupied with the conspiracy case, it goes to his credit for implementing measures such as launching programmes to make up shortages of officers and airmen caused by repatriation of Bengali

personnel in the wake of 1971 war. He will also be remembered for his courageous and honourable course to retire from service.

While this drama was going on, as predicted by me, I was posted out to Air Defence Command Chaklala. I informed Tahira of my posting but surprisingly she was not perturbed at all. I told her to start packing and she replied, "*shub dermian khuda mehrban*" (who knows what blessings God has for us in the morning after the night?). Air Vice Marshal Zulfiqar took over on 16th April 1974 and we had a few days remaining to move to Chaklala. The new Air Chief decided to visit my base. In my office the first question he asked me if I was happy with the posting. I replied in the negative because I had not completed my tenure and therefore I had not yet proved to whether I had been successful or not. Besides I had put in certain programmes for attaining operational excellence, and I would like to see the result of my efforts. I told him that we were in second position in flighty safety competition for the year 1973 and I was determined to win the competition for 1974. The Air Chief cancelled my posting to Air Defence Command Chaklala. During his annual visit in 1975 the CAS presented the Flighty Safety Trophy to me on the parade ground and said, "I was told by some officers that your base had won by fluke and I am saying this categorically that it was not a fluke because the Base Commander had told me during my visit last year that the Base will win the coveted trophy for 1974 and you have done so. I congratulate the Base Commander, officers and men for winning the coveted prize." The Air Chief promoted me to the rank of Air Commodore.

Senior Defence Management Course

During May 1975, I was detailed to attend a one month Senior International Defence Management Course at the Naval

Post Graduate School at Monterey California, USA. My fellow student on course from the Pak Army was Brigadier Badshah. The Brigadier was very intelligent with a sharp and incisive mind. He was also a very jovial person. He was good company as a colleague on the course. We arrived in Monterey in the evening and by the time we reached at the base, welcome get together for students, staff and the hosts had ended and every one had dispersed except for our hosts and the staff. Our host, a retired Captain in the Navy and his lady wife received us. Brigadier Badshah felt famished and wanted to eat dinner. He requested our host to take us to a hotel. The host suggested a nearby restaurant but Badshah insisted to eat in a hotel. Reluctantly the host dropped us at a five star hotel about a mile away from the base. We went inside and were ushered to a very posh restaurant. As soon as Badshah looked at the menu he had a shock. The price of soup was nine dollars, main course twenty-four dollars and dessert was also very costly. The total cost of the meal was one quarter the money we had in our pockets. The hotel catered for millionaires living in and around Monterey. We both made a hasty retreat from the hotel and went over to the nearby restaurant which was earlier suggested by our host. We had a good meal at a reasonable price and walked back to our rooms. Monterey is situated on west coast of America about 268 miles north of Los Angeles and about 130 miles south of San Francisco. It has one of the best climates in USA; the temperature ranges through out the year between 60 to 80 degrees. Presently, Monterey is home of writers, reasonably rich retirees composed of civilians and navy officers and has developed exclusiveness over the years. However in the past it was a cultural home of the landed gentry residing around the area who would gather in Monterey to meet each other and to enjoy ball room dances in the biggest dance hall I have ever

seen. The land lords used to come in their private railway luxury coaches. There was a vast parking area for rail cars for all the guests. Of course that was the glorious past and now the hangar is a museum for remembering the yesteryears. The classes started with introductions of staff and students. The composition of students ranged from Lieutenant Colonels to three star Generals and Admirals. Two Admirals wore monocles and all three star officers had stiff upper lips associated with senior ranks. The students were from Iran, Spain, Pakistan, Norway and remaining from South America. The class composed of a good mix of three services from different countries. The Chief Instructor told us that the syllabus was composed of one to two lectures a day by visiting scholars followed by discussions. We were required to read or browse through the recommended books. All together it was a gentlemanly course.

The Chief Instructor also told us that next day ie, the second day we would play a war game composed of four teams and each team would have four to five members. Our team besides me had two Iranian Army Generals and one Norwegian Navy Commodore. The teams were dispersed in four rooms with necessary communications with the control room manned by the Directing Staff. We were told that all team members were to act like the senior planning staff of our forces. Every year budget would be allotted for next ten years and the teams were required to induct necessary equipment to prepare for war. The war would be declared any time after five years. In our team the Norwegian Commodore and I were the two workers and the Iranian Generals decided to be in attendance. Luckily the Commodore had a slide-rule to do mathematical calculations that made our task extremely easy. The control room allocated the first year's budget; also various types of equipment were notified. All hardware that could be purchased for induction had 'Utill' value, for measurement.

The Commodore and I concluded that linchpin to win the war was to have high 'Utill' score at all times. Therefore we started our purchases with that as yardstick. After eight years the war was declared and our plans were collected by the Chief Instructor. After two hours the results were announced in the class room. Our team was the winner with the best possible score. In fact the Chief Instructor said that our planning was the best so far compared to the previous courses and it was closest to the Pink (official) solution. The instructor asked me how we managed to achieve that excellent result. I pointed that we assessed that the linchpin of the exercise was to have high 'Utill' score at all times and therefore we decided to purchase equipment with that in mind. The Chief instructor agreed that the key factor indeed was to have maximum number of 'Utills' during the exercise. He added that for planning it must be kept in mind to purchase the best equipment for your forces. To celebrate the exercise there was a get together in the bar for students and the staff. I noticed a lot of deflated egos, monocles were off, the barrier of rank structure was no longer there and every one started behaving like students. I enquired from a member of the Directing Staff if the goals of the exercise were to mesh the class into one whole? He said "yes," other wise it would be very difficult to manage the interaction within the class when there was so much disparity in the rank structure of students. He added that it was in fact the main purpose of the exercise.

The third day onwards the course started in full swing. The guest lecturers were the top most scholars in their area of study and research; and all were authors of many books in their field of expertise. The lecture was followed by a very insightful and fruitful discussion by students as well as staff. That was the regular pattern except for a few days break of study tour to San Francisco and that too was very informative adding to our knowledge. It will not be fair if I did not write about logistic

support provided by the staff comprising a Master Sergeant who had a Corporal and a typist helping him. He had to look after 50 officers of two different courses. He was responsible for every aspect of trainee officer's needs ie from receiving them, to the time they departed from USA. With limited staff he did a superb job. Every one on the course appreciated his contribution towards making our stay very comfortable. June 25, 1975 was our last day at school. We were awarded certificates for successfully finishing the course. We departed the same day for our homeward journey.

Old is Gold

Before I close this chapter I would like to write about an interesting account of my return flight to Masroor Base. I had gone to Air Headquarters to attend a conference. Since the weather was overcast with low clouds at Peshawar, I took Flight Lieutenant Hasnaat (not sure of the name) as No 2, which was required for safety reasons. During the return flight we encountered tail wind and ended up with a lot of fuel. When we were out about 25 miles from the base No 2 called, "Lead we have lot of fuel on board, how about air combat to burn the extra fuel." He had in fact thrown down the gauntlet. I accepted the challenge. It was like a subaltern challenging the Brigade Commander for a duel. Such challenges however are unique in the air forces. In flying the leaders have to prove themselves better than the pilots under their command in all exercises, at least eight out of ten times to be accepted as worthy leaders. I turned towards the air combat training area and climbed to 25,000 feet. Then we split in opposite directions and after about a minute I gave a call for about turn to face each other head on, to start manoeuvring to get on the other's tail. It did not take me

long for me to get behind No 2. Although I had been out of active flying for more than 10 years but I was good in air combat. I owe that to Squadron Leader M G Tawab, who later became Air Vice Marshal and Chief of Air Staff, Bangladesh Air Force. He was a compulsive air combat pilot. At PAF Base Samungli, where we used to take our squadrons in summers, we both practiced a lot of air combat. Frankly, flying with him I really learnt the fine art of air combat. He used to say, "The only criterion to judge a fighter pilot is his ability as an air combat pilot." When we landed back I noticed a mischievous grin on my No 2's face. With a similar grin I told him "old is gold".

Sanity Restored in the PAF

When Air Vice Marshal (later Air Chief Marshal) Zulfiqar took over the command of the PAF on 16th April 1974 it was the most trying period for the air force as well for him. He took over after two premature changes of command of the air force. What's more, the wounds of 1971 war were still fresh and a handful of Army and PAF officers were implicated in a conspiracy against the government. Since the officers involved were of low level rank, it did not create any ripples in the large Army, whatsoever. The Army handled it deftly and the chapter was closed. In the case of the PAF it took an ugly turn. The whole episode has been written in earlier paragraphs but here I would like to point out that the air force was bruised and shaken when Air Vice Marshal Zulfiqar took over the command. The task of repairing the damage done to discipline and morale was looming large for him. In addition he had to redress serious shortages of pilots created due to attrition in wars and resignations of officers as a consequence of instability. During 1971 War certain shortages of infrastructure were highlighted which had to be provided and

weaknesses pointed out had to be eliminated. The Air Chief launched an extensive programme to train pilots and technical man power in order to fill the gap that was created due to breakaway of East Pakistan and the attrition of 1971 war and post-war indiscipline. The weaknesses experienced in air defence system needed to be addressed and the whole system had to be evaluated and redesigned in the light of latest technological advances in the west. Therefore a long range of programmes was chalked out. Surface-to-air missiles were to be added, new airfields to be built and the old and obsolete T-33 jet trainer aircraft were to be replaced by Chinese FT-5 trainer. As a consequence of American aid cut off during 1965 War, self reliance that was started during Air Marshal Nur Khan's tenure, was to be continued. Great headway was made when Rupees 30 crores were given by President Zia-ul-Haq, to start the project of in-country overhaul of Mirage aircraft at Kamra and Ministry of Defence, was to look after the project and plan for its further expansion. The project was conceived by Air Commodore S M Saeed who had discussed it with President Zia-ul-Haq in one of the meetings. The project was to be run by Ministry of Defence but the trained manpower was to be provided by PAF until Kamra could train its own civilian technical personnel. By 1978 the project had evolved into an elaborate rebuild factory that would effectively confer a complete new life cycle upon each of these valuable and expensive aircraft resulting in saving of colossal amount of foreign exchange.

PAF's Air Defence – A Success Story

Air Defence involves the protection of lives and installations vital for the economy and the security of the country against an aerial attack. The possibility of a sudden attack by the enemy even

before the declaration of war calls for the highest standard of readiness and efficiency on a 24-hour basis. An effective air defence system, of necessity, constitutes an impregnable surveillance network, a quick and responsive command & control system and all-weather ground and air launched weapons. Pakistan Air Force has always accorded due importance to its air defence system and thus enjoyed a lead over the contemporary regional countries. The development of Pakistan Air Defence System could be divided into four distinct phases namely the pre-1965, the inter-war era, post-1971 era and post-nuclear era. On becoming member of SEATO and CENTO we received two sets of high powered FPS-20 for surveillance and FPS-6 for height finding. It was decided to install one set at Sakesar and one at Badin. A third set which was to be given in 1964/1965 was withheld due to embargo imposed on us during 1965 war. Both these radars were installed and ready by 1960. These were the only radars available to us during 1965 war and they gave outstanding service in peace and war. Prior to 1964, we had British WW-II vintage radars but they had outlived their utility. Another advantage derived from being member of the CENTO and SEATO pacts was that the PAF was able to train large number of air defence controllers in a short time. On their return, extensive practice interceptions were carried out and these created a bond between controllers and the pilots. In fact, the bond was so strong that pilots imagined the controller was sitting next to them in their cockpits. Pilots could recognize the voices of each controller. The outstanding names of yesteryears were Shahzada, Rab Nawaz, Farooq, Muhammad Akram, Salim Metla, 'Billa' Wahid, Ejaz, Nassimullah, MT Siddiqui and their boss, the redoubtable Zaki Butt, who made significant contribution in the field of control and reporting organization during early days of evolution. There were many more such equally competent controllers at Sakesar and Badin. On Eid day, on 10th April 1959

the SOC at Sakesar detected an Indian intruder at high altitude and scrambled 2 F-86s on Air Defence Alert to intercept the intruder. The enemy aircraft, a Canberra, was intercepted and shot down by Flt Lt M Yunis. The Indian crew was captured. In 1965 War, we had good medium and high level coverage but low level coverage was non-existent. It was however appreciated that future Indo-Pak wars were going to be fought at low level. After 1965 War the government gave us generous finances to address our needs for air defence and ground infrastructure. After Tashkent Peace Accord we purchased radars from USSR but had to decommission them due to shortage of spares. We, therefore, bought three British Condor radars to equip three squadrons. These were good radars with integrally built computers and simulators for training of controllers. A major step was taken to decentralize supervision of air defence organization throughout the PAF by establishing Air Defence Command at Chaklala. Also Air Defence Control and Reporting (C&R) branch was re-designated as Air Defence Weapons Controllers (ADWC) branch. The establishment of Air Defence Branch created an infrastructure for the Air Defence Commander to focus his attention on the air defence units spread all over Pakistan, a task heretofore was performed by ACAS (Ops). This was a very logical and progressive step. There were a few experiments made with the set up of air defence organization but with the change of command in the PAF in 1974, an extensive review was carried out to make an effective air defence organization. Finally it was decided to set up Air Defence Command (ADC) with its Headquarters at Chaklala. Under this set up Air Headquarters were responsible for policy functions only and Air Defence Command was given day to day operational control of all the field formations. Air Vice Marshal Inam H Khan became the first AOC and assumed command on 23rd March 1975; he was provided adequate staff to run the organization. The establishment

of new branch gave a fillip to the ADWC officers. Heretofore maximum rank that ADWC officer could be promoted was that of Wing Commander but with a separate branch they had the chance to become Air Commodores and many were promoted in due course of time.

Project Crystal

In 1976 a team was set up to plan and group together various components of air defence in line with the direction of Air Headquarters. Project Crystal was the code given to this project. Initially the project was headed by Air Vice Marshal Sadruddin, and in 1977, Air Vice Marshal Mahmood Hasan took over the project. Thereafter Air Commodore Shujaat-ullah Khan took over the project and on his retirement Group Captain M Y Khan became the head and oversaw the project till it was fully completed in 1985. The project team visited UK, France, USA, Germany, Turkey and Spain to study their air defence systems to select suitable hardware, especially low looking radars for the PAF. In Phase-I of the project it was decided to purchase about 40 Mobile Pulse Doppler Radars (MPDRs) manufactured by Siemens Company of Germany in 1976. In addition six mobile Control and Reporting Centres (CRCs) were also ordered at the same time. Several radars could be hooked on to each CRC at the same time with automated, real-time data linking. The computers in CRCs processed the data to be displayed as well as to carry out an interception.

When the project was completed on paper, I was tasked by the Chief of Air Staff for presentation to the cabinet chaired by the then Prime Minister Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto. On the due date, the Air Chief and I went to the Prime Minister's cabinet room for presentation. On the way to the cabinet room I saw that Air Chief Marshal Zulfiqar was worried. I gave the presentation to the cabinet. When it

finished the Prime Minister was very happy. He said that the presentation was so informative and convincing that he had no questions or clarification. He asked others to question if they wished to clear any aspect. I was asked one minor question each by General Tikka Khan the Army Chief and Mr Ghulam Ishaq Khan the Finance Minister. There and then the Prime Minister approved the project costing one hundred and fifty million dollars. On the way back the Air Chief was all smiles. I asked him why he was so glum when we were going in for the presentation. He said that your presentation was excellent but I have seen people coming out with tears in their eyes, if they were not well prepared and convincing. I did not know how well you knew the subject. I told him I was Sector Air Defence North as well as South, besides having planned the Royal Jordanian Air Defence from scratch. Therefore, I knew the subject very well. The project was then handed over to Air Vice Marshal Mahmood Hassan.

Surface-to-Air Missiles

In 1975, Project Pasban was set up to induct French Crotale 2000 SAMs in the air force and in 1976 the PAF raised the number of Crotale squadrons with upgraded Crotale 3000. In 1983 high altitude SAMs from China were also inducted in the air force. With these qualitative additions a balance in air defence environment was achieved in the Pakistan Air Force.

Assistant Chief of Air Staff (Operations)

At the end of September 1975, I reached Air Headquarters to take over as Assistant Chief of Air Staff Operations (ACAS-O). I took an appointment to see the Air Chief. When I reached his office he welcomed me to Air Headquarters. While I was with

him, I expected some guidance or instructions from him. He said, "Shamim you have commanded a Fighter Squadron, a Fighter Wing and a Fighter Base. You have also had experience of Air Defence matters during your tenures as Sector Air Defence Commander and Base Commander of two Air Defence Bases. You know what is required to do as a Principal Staff Officer (PSO) to enhance the operational efficiency and preparedness of the air force. Good luck in your new assignment." In the past Plans Directorate was under the ACAS (O) but it was detached and made a separate branch under Air Commodore Jamal A Khan. This was a very logical decision by the Air Chief as the requirement of updating war plans, liaison with other service and future planning had assumed greater importance and wider scope. Also, that helped ACAS (O) to look after day to day operations only. The duties of ACAS (O) as a PSO responsible to CAS were the following: policy, control and direction of operations and for preparedness of all units including Air Defence units of the PAF; coordination and implementation of policy decisions on Air Defence at inter and intra-services level; determining and evaluating operational requirements of the PAF; matters relating to operational requirements of communications; policy decisions regarding use of weapons; matters relating to electronic warfare, research and development (R&D). I was briefed by each directorate in the branch and I was happy with the pace of work and the personnel managing their branches. Thereafter, I took a tour of flying bases to familiarize myself with the line-up of the squadrons. It was heartening to note that squadrons were being commanded by battle tested squadron commanders and they knew what they had to do to make pilots under their commands worthy members of the elite service. Next I went to GHQ to call on Major General Abbasi, the Chief of the General Staff, my counterpart in the

Army. While we were enjoying tea, General Abbasi starting giving me a lecture on MiG-21 aircraft. I kept on listening attentively. It was educational to note that the Army officer who had flown only L-19s had reasonable knowledge on an enemy aircraft. But of course lecturing me on this aircraft was like taking coal back to Newcastle. I said goodbye and told the General this was just a call and next time I shall come to discuss inter-services cooperation matters with him. He said, "Please come and see my Director of Military operations (DMO)." I replied, "General Sahib I will come and see you only while my Director of Operations (D of Ops) will see your Director of Military Operations." The General realized what he had said and tried to make amends. Except for this case I have never come across any army officer who was so conscious about rank when dealing with inter-services officers.

In April No 1 Fighter Conversion Squadron was formed at Masroor Air Base. It was equipped with Chinese FT-5, a dual seat aircraft, replacement of T-33s to convert pilots graduating from PAF Academy Risalpur, having flown T-37 Jet trainer, on to fighter aircraft. This was another step to overcome our dependence on American equipment that had become totally unsupportable due to embargo on spares. 1st January 1976 was an auspicious day in the history of the PAF. On this day the rank of the Chief of the Air Staff was elevated to Air Chief Marshal and Air Marshal Zulfiqar became the first recipient of this honour. Now the rank structure in the Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee was rationalized by thoughtful decision by Mr Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto the Prime Minister of Pakistan. On 5th May Fighter Leaders' School was moved from PAF Base Masroor to Sargodha and renamed as 'Combat Commanders' School. At Masroor the fighter leaders were being trained on F-86s and in Sargodha they would be

trained on faster and more modern aircraft and also carry out air combat with dissimilar types of aircraft.

Grant of Non-Operational (Military) Award

I was awarded Sitara-i Imtiaz (Military) on 23rd March 1978.The citation is quoted below:

"Air Commodore M Anwar Shamim is a highly conscientious and diligent officer who has served the Pakistan Air Force for 26 years with utmost dedication and a very high sense of duty. He has held various important command and staff appointments, such as OC Fighter Bomber Wing, Base Commander Sakesar, Korangi Creek, and Masroor and a tour of diplomatic assignment in Jordan. He is at present employed as Assistant Chief of Air Staff (Operations) at Air Headquarters for over two years. Throughout his meritorious career, he has consistently discharged his duties with great courage and poise. He pursues his objectives with utmost dedication and perseverance and achieves creditable results. He possesses an unequalled spirit and energy for work. His thoroughness, meticulous attention to details and unflinching loyalty to the service have been highly commendable. His organizing ability, effective supervision and guidance have made a significant contribution to enhance the operational efficiency of the PAF. For his consistent distinguished performance, dedication to service and exemplary devotion to the Pakistan Air Force, he is recommended for the award of Sitara-i-Imtiaz (Military)."

12
An Auspicious Appointment

28th June 1978 was an auspicious day for me. At about 2:30 PM, I received a call from President's House that President Zia-ul-Haq wished to speak to me. The President came on the line and told me to come over to the Army House at 5 PM to meet him. I thanked the President and informed him that I needed to have Air Chief's consent to do so. He said, "Go ahead, and take his permission. I have already informed him." I rang up the Air Chief who told me to come over to the Air House. I went to the Air House and met the Air Chief. He told me to go to Army House in Rawalpindi and be there at 5 PM. The President has good news for you. On my way to my house I was wondering what could be the good news. At that time the job of Managing Director Pakistan International Airline was vacant and I thought that could be the possibility. Frankly I was not too keen for that job, for I would prefer staying in the PAF. However, I also knew if I refused that job the next stop could be retirement from service because I was in the seniority bracket where you either make it or break it. With these thoughts I headed for Army House and reached there at exact 5 PM. After a couple of minutes wait the President walked in. Over a cup of tea the President told me the happy news that I was to take over as the next Air Chief with effect from 23rd July 1978. He also promoted me to the rank of Air Vice

Marshal. He congratulated me and he himself put on the new rank on my shoulders. It was indeed very thoughtful of him. Only a service officer can realise the significance of putting on a new rank. He told me that the change in command of the PAF will be on the air at 6 PM news broadcast. He switched on the TV. While talking he gave me the best news. He said, "Shamim, as Air Chief you will have nothing to do with Martial Law. The Army has imposed it and they are responsible for the outcome, one way or the other. You as head of a technical service, devote all your energies in enhancing the professionalism in your service. You and your officers will not be involved in any matters relating to running the country." To hear these clear cut instructions was a great relief for me. I thanked him for his views regarding the role of the PAF in Martial Law. It was now 6 PM and the happy news was broadcast. I once again thanked the President for showing his confidence in me and assured him that Inshallah (God Willing) I shall turn the air force into a force second to none as desired by our great leader Quaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah. With this undertaking I departed from the Army House to Chaklala air base to fly back to Peshawar.

While flying back I had a flash back of my memories starting from Usterzai Payan in Kohat District, when I was barely 6 years old when I made an innocent wish to be in that aircraft that flew past my house in 1936; and also all the tribulations as well as beatitude that I experienced throughout my life in the service. Today, I was firmly convinced that fate was always guiding me to the path that led to this honour bestowed on me by Almighty Allah.

In retrospect, I recall large number of visitors to my office during the six months prior to my becoming the CAS. They would start a conversation but end up talking against the President. I would parry those baits to join them. In my view, a serviceman is entitled to have his views but should not take part

in politics; he can however express views while casting his vote. If he is very keen he should leave the service and join politics. A serviceman should never, while in service or after he retires, say anything derogatory against his President or Prime Minister and that also includes his bosses. If he cannot give his loyalty to the boss during service, he should ask for a posting or resign and seek greener pastures elsewhere. That is the only honourable course of action for a serviceman. One of the visitors was my class fellow from PAF but I did not know that he was related to the President. He was most vocal amongst all the visitors. I gave him a cup of tea and excused myself for attending a conference. This onslaught was no doubt sponsored to solicit my views regarding the President.

From 8th June to 22nd July was a very hectic period because there was a lot of work to be done. Numerous congratulatory calls needed to be answered as well as attending farewells for Air Chief Marshal Zulfiqar in the evenings. My present staff was unable to cope with the load of work. I therefore attached Group Captain Abbas Mirza to take over as my Senior Staff Officer; thereafter the office started functioning smoothly. Abbas was one of the best officers in the PAF. He was also an exceptional pilot. He flew with me in Risalpur College as a cadet. He was one of the few I graded as a born pilot. He was to take over as my Personal Staff Officer (PSO) from 23rd onwards. I couldn't have chosen a staff officer better than him. Flight Lieutenant Sohail Hamid took over as ADC. He was a rather quiet person in the presence of seniors but quite jovial amongst his colleagues, with subtle humour. Most important post was that of Secretary to Chief of the Air Staff and that was filled by Air Commodore Yamin. Yamin was extremely mature, knowledgeable and an efficient officer. He was already performing the duties as the previous CAS' Secretary and I decided to let him stay in that

position for sake of continuity. He proved to be the best Secretary I had during my tenure in the PAF. I may mention here that the Air Chief's Secretary is also Secretary to the PAF Air Board. 22nd July 1978 was my last day as ACAS (O). On this day I was also promoted to the rank of Air Marshal.

A New Horizon

The handing over and taking over of command of the PAF took place in the office early in the morning, on 23rd July, 1978. Thereafter, Air Chief Marshal Zulfiqar A Khan was seen off at PAF Base Peshawar with full protocol. After that I went home to say my prayers to thank Almighty Allah for bestowing this great honour on me and requesting Him to guide me and to give me strength so that I make my contribution to enhance the defence of Fatherland. I also prayed for strength not to take any revenge from people who tried, knowingly or otherwise, to ruin my career. After a cup of tea with my family I returned to office. This was the time for consolidation and make necessary changes to appoint Principal Staff Officers (PSOs) necessitated by retirement of a few senior officers who had reached their retirement age and a few officers who were senior to me opted for retirement, a very honourable course of action in the armed forces. To fill the slots of PSOs, Air Vice Marshal Nawabzada Rahmat Khan was appointed Deputy Chief of Staff – Operations (DCAS-O), Air Vice Marshal I A Khan Deputy Chief Air Staff – Maintenance (DCAS-M) and Air Vice Marshal S M Dutta took over as Deputy Chief of Air Staff – Administration (DCAS-A). Air Vice Marshal Ayaz A Khan took over as Air Officer Commanding, Air Defence Command. These posts were previously held by Air Commodores but I got them upgraded to

Air Vice Marshal's rank to rationalize the rank structure as that with the Army for better inter-services working relationship.

In addition to the laid down task of the Air Chief by the Government, I visualized the goals I had to achieve were: To evaluate the threat faced by the country jointly in Joint Chief's Committee (JCC) and plan for the response; convince the members of the JCC and the Government for allotment of funds for the suggested response; to give direction to the PAF to achieve operational excellence through optimum combat-readiness compatible with maximum flight safety; to review PAF's doctrine of tactical air operations and introduce organizational changes for better liaison and coordination with the Pak Army and Pak Navy; to give priority to sports, especially to inter-services competitions; to take measures to enhance personnel welfare in the PAF. The first three tasks were a function of time and the ongoing process that starts at staff level and moves upwards to Air Board and then on to JCC and the Government.

Exercise 'Jetstream-78'

"He who is not prepared today will be less so prepared tomorrow." Ovid

Since the PAF had regained basic operational posture in full measures by 1978, therefore for the goal of achieving operational excellence in the PAF, I directed DCAS-O to prepare PAF-wide series of annual exercises code-named 'Jetstream.' Apart from exercising the PAF itself on war footing, these series were to progressively increase emphasis on joint services liaison at all levels, not only to ensure more effective support to the Pak Army and Pak Navy in any future conflict, but also for other two services to understand and appreciate exactly what PAF can and cannot do with the

wherewithal it has in support of their operations. Since 1978, these annual exercise have been a regular feature of the PAF combat training programme. The first exercise 'Jetstream' was launched in December 1978. The aim of the exercise was to determine combat effectiveness of the PAF in general and to test and evaluate various concepts of operations in particular.

The objectives of the exercise were: To test and evaluate six major concepts. These were counter air operations aimed at the neutralisation of adversary's runways for given time period; to employ low performance aircraft and B-57 bombers for day raids in areas with insufficient enemy response potential; to carry out air operations in adverse environments, assuming the enemy has inflicted damage and temporarily neutralized a base; to redeploy certain flying units during the exercise operations; to exercise the SAMs and Ask Ack defences of some of the participating bases; to test and evaluate the deployment of balloon barrages in pre-designated areas; to evaluate operational, maintenance and administrative facilities of the PAF, within the scope of the exercise. The eight days' exercise, from 16th December to 24th December 1978, was very intense and successful. I expressed my satisfaction that all ranks had identified themselves with their assignments and performed their role with zeal and vigour. In my order of the day at the conclusion of the exercise I said, "It is our bounden duty to build up a strong and efficient Air Force, second to none in patriotism, and professionalism, ever ready to repel the evil intentions of any aggressor. Let us rededicate ourselves to the noble cause and with God's help ensure for our future generations a secure and prosperous Pakistan." The reports were finalised by participating bases and sent to Air Headquarters in one month. Thereafter Air Headquarters compiled the final report in one month and a thorough debriefing was held at Air Headquarters. It was attended by Air

Headquarters' staff officers, all Base Commanders, all Officers Commanding Wings and Squadron Commanders. It was a very compressive debriefing highlighting all achievements, shortfalls, and the lessons learnt.

Flight Safety

On assumption of command of the Pakistan Air Force, I had pointed out that we had completed the phase of making up manpower shortages and were now entering the phase of consolidating the Air Force. I directed all PSOs to achieve this goal through optimum combat-readiness compatible with maximum flight safety. I urged them to put all their efforts in achieving these twin requirements. I also said that it was my aim that the Pakistan Air Force should be second to none in the matter of flight safety and should be able to at least halve the major accident rate which had remained in the region of three per 10,000 flying hours in the past. I had also visualized that we should eventually be able to restrict this rate to one per 10,000 flying hours. I knew that this goal was rather very difficult to achieve because the top air forces in world were close to 1.5 to 2 accidents per 10,000 hours of flying even though their 50% flying was done on multi-engine aircraft (bombers and transport aircraft). I emphasized that a fairly large number of the major accidents that took place were due to indiscipline and supervisory errors. All these were avoidable. Also the rate of major accidents on ground was very high (0.59 per 10,000 flying hours) and the rate of major accidents on trainer and light communication aircraft was 1.6 per 10,000 flying hours was also fairly high, although these types are comparatively safer to operate. Had we not defaulted in these spheres, I am sure the

PAF would have been able to achieve the near-ideal rate of one major accident per 10,000 flying hours during my tenure.

Air Board

The Air Board is the highest body that decides on promotions, retirements, introduction of new policies, changes in the existing policies, induction of new equipment required in the PAF and any agenda put forward by any one of the Principal Staff Officer (PSOs). The composition of the Air Board in my time was: Chief of the Air Staff (Chairman); Vice Chief of Air Staff (Member); (Deputy Chief of Air Staff – Operations (Member); Deputy Chief of Air Staff – Training (Member); Deputy Chief of Air Staff – Administration (Member); Deputy Chief of Air Staff Maintenance – (Member) and Secretary to the Air Board. Perhaps it will be a surprise to the civilian readers that though the Air Force is a military organisation, but the decisions that affect the PAF as a whole, are made by consensus. The Chief has the casting vote. However if any member feels very strongly about an issue, and has personal knowledge about it, that would be considered and given due weightage. This is a body that relies totally on the integrity of each individual member. I may point out that every case that requires Air Board decision is circulated to all members prior to its inclusion in the agenda for discussion and decision by the Air Board. All members are required to comment on the agenda that is circulated to them. They come fully prepared to discuss and offer their opinions on all issues of the agenda scheduled for the meeting. Once the collective decision is taken, it is then incumbent on every member to pursue it as it was his own decision, because he was party to the decision making. The service structure is well defined hierarchically, from top to

bottom and it precisely defines every layer of organization and its relation to each other, as well to any other activity down the chain of command.

An interesting conversation took place in the office of Secretary General Defence (a Lieutenant General), while the Naval Chief was sitting there. Since the Secretary General Defence was dragging on the issues, by force of habit, the Naval Chief proposed to him that he should preside over the Naval Board meetings. He looked at me and asked for my opinion about the Air Board meetings. I said "No way, none other than Principal Staff Officers (PSOs) will be the members of the Air Board." The matter was dropped. A more serious move was made by the Director General ISI who suggested to me to include him as a member of the Air Board. I declined to accept his proposal. However a month later a case was put up to the President, through the Ministry of Defence, by AHQ for promotion of an officer from Air Commodore to Air Vice Marshal. Such cases are sent by the ministry to ISI for their comments and thereafter, the case is put up to the President. The ISI gave negative comments on the family of the officer under consideration. Due to those comments the President did not approve the case. Since I had personal knowledge of the family of the officer, I took the case to the President who very kindly reversed his decision. During that meeting with the President, he suggested to me why not to include Director General (DG) ISI as a member of the Air Board for promotions. I declined very diplomatically and put forward a proposal that in future we will send the promotion cases for comments by the ISI prior to the Air Board meetings. The President agreed with my proposal. By this route we were able to sort out all cases before these were put up to the Ministry of Defence. In all fairness, the ISI was not always wrong in their comments and observations; it is just that

we did not want the DG ISI to surprise us in the meetings. After following this route we did not have any problem with our cases.

Inspection of Bases

The Inspectorate was then composed of an Air Commodore and experienced officers of each branch. Their job was to plan an unannounced visit, once a year, to all bases. The Inspectorate would stay at the base two to three weeks depending on the size of the base. At the end of the visit they compiled a report pointing out achievements and failings of the various units. They made recommendations for the base to be incorporated within two months. The report was thoroughly discussed with the Base Commander and his unit commanders before it was finalised.

After two months of the visit by the Inspectorate, Chief of the Air Staff along with Principal Staff Officers (PSOs) visited the base. This was a planned annual visit and the base was informed well in advance. Two weeks prior to visit by CAS, Command Warrant Officer, who was part of CAS's Secretariat, visited the base and compiled his report on the airmen messes, cleanliness of the airmen's living areas and other points of interest regarding men and their families. Thus the Chief of Air Staff and his team had a thorough knowledge of the health of the base. In addition a report by Inspector General Flight Safety and by Combat Commander School was also available to the visiting team. Additionally, a very important input of information of the base was submitted by Director of Air Intelligence (DAI) who had Field Liaison Unit (FLU) on every base. They however submitted reports to DAI but a copy was also put up to the Base Commander. Therefore it was not a cloak and dagger organisation. The important point to be noted was that all agencies helped the Base Commander to run his base efficiently

having full knowledge of all activities of his base. After all, the Base Commander was, and is, the representative of Chief of the Air Staff and directly responsible to him for efficient running of the base. On the day of the visit, the first item is the guard of honour followed by base parade. Thereafter, the Base Commander briefs the CAS and the team on the performance of the base during his command. My first visit was to a major flying base. The Base Commander started off by pointing out failings of his predecessor. I stopped him right there and told him that I knew all about his predecessors' tenure and therefore I wanted to know what improvements he had done during his command. The Base Commander was rather flustered because he had prepared his briefing on negative points of his predecessor. After the briefing the inspection tour of units was undertaken as arranged by the Base Commander. Some times unexpected places are visited by the CAS and his entourage to cross-check what has been reported by the Command Warrant Officer. The inspection is followed by lunch with all the officers of the base. On my return I sent a directive to all bases regarding the conduct of briefing by the Base Commanders during CAS' visit.

Conferences at AHQ

Every month all Base Commanders converged at AHQ and one by one they were required to brief AHQ staff on the performance of their bases during the previous month. These briefings kept the base commanders on their toes throughout the month. The Base Commanders also got a chance to sort out problems, they faced with the concerned staff at AHQ, and also any support they needed to run their bases more efficiently.

Bi-annual flight safety review was carried out at Air Headquarters to assess the flight safety performance of flying

bases. It was attended by Base Commanders, OC Wings (including maintenance wings) Squadron Commanders of flying squadrons and air defence commanders. The Inspector General Flight Safety reviewed performance of squadrons and bases highlighting the weak areas and commended those who had done well. In the review he declared the winner squadron and the base that had won the coveted Flight Safety Trophy for the year. Most of the measures were adopted by Air Marshal Asghar Khan and followed by subsequent Air Chiefs and from time to time improvements were made in the system. I am sure required changes came after I retired and left the service.

Sports in the PAF

We were not doing well in inter-services sports. When I went into detail for the reasons for not showing good results, I was not surprised to find that officers in-charge were either not conversant with games they were to train or not taking enough interest to lead the games. This was put right by appointing officers who were players themselves and were keen sportsmen. The efforts by the officers paid dividends and we became inter-services cricket, squash, and tennis champions for 1982. Since then PAF has figured prominently in inter-services and national sports. The old aphorism – putting a professional officer in-charge of an organisation will always produce desired results. Although our first Air Chief was a golf player but golf did not catch fancy amongst the PAF officers. One of the major reasons was that not all bases had a golf course or were not located near a golf course. After assuming command I directed all Base Commanders to have at least a nine hole-golf course organised on their bases. The PAF imported golf sets in knock-down condition and assembled those at AHQ work shop. These golf sets were then given to officers on

easily repayable instalments. This had a profound effect, consequently large numbers of officers and their families started playing golf. In fact, the families found it a good outlet in places like Rafiqui, Sargodha and Kohat and a few other bases. The result was that in 1980 we became inter-services golf champions for the first time defeating the long established winners. Then we had a few golf haters for unknown reasons. I wrote personal letters to those officers to play the game for two weeks and if they did not like the game they may give up. Prominent among those were Air Commodore Jamal A Khan (later became Air Chief) and Air Commodore Arshad Choudhry (later became Vice Chief). After 15 days of playing they became ardent fans. In fact Arshad literally would have liked to sleep on the golf course, if he could. The Chief of the Air Staff is the President of Squash Rackets Federation in Pakistan. The PAF has always taken keen interest in this game from very early days starting with the world's number one player Hashim Khan, soon after partition. Winning of number one slot was always imperative with us. When I took over the command of the PAF, Jahangir Khan was the reigning champion of the world. One day Group Captain Changazi, who was looking after the affairs of squash in Pakistan on my behalf, invited me to watch a young skinny boy playing the game. For his age and build, he was an excellent player with lot of potential for reaching the top slot in the world of squash. I told Changazi to instruct the Officers' Mess to feed the young boy Jansher Khan with a high protein diet. Within a year he grew into a six feet solid young man and became member of the Pakistan team and after Jahangir Khan's retirement he took over the number one slot in the world and remained number one player till he was afflicted with a knee injury. He was Group Captain Changazi's find and bringing him to the forefront goes to his credit. In 1979 Senior Technician Daulat Khan became world amateur squash champion. In Pakistan

we are lucky in that we have in-born talent in our players in hockey, cricket and squash. Unfortunately cricket and hockey became victim of pulls and pushes, greed and politics. The slight decline in squash is a transition phase and our ranking will improve as the game is in good hands.

Automation of Air Defence System

In 1979, six air defence wings were established. There was a qualitative improvement in the whole system. The clutter free picture on the scope, computerized calculations of the intercept profiles and presentation of an integrated air situation from radars, with uninterrupted display of both friendly as well as hostile aircraft was a significant improvement over the performance of earlier equipment. With high enthusiasm, our controllers started to master the new means available to them to perform their task. In Phase-II of the project, six high powered TPS-43 radars were inducted for surveillance of high altitude tracks and were integrated together with low looking MPDRs to provide automated transfer data from the radars and Mobile Observation Units (MOUs) to the Sector Operations Centre (SOCs) and also simultaneously to Air Defence Command Centres. These high powered radars started arriving in the country in 1980. The next major project undertaken was full automation of all the radars CRCs, SOCs, ADC and Operational Commands. To carry out this major project the ministry chose two companies, one was French and the other was Hughes of USA. The Hughes was better of the two because their price was $52 million compared to the French $59 million. They had experience of setting up air defence systems of 28 countries. The most important factor was that Hughes was using the latest 'Data Extractor', the brain of the system. On merit, the PAF recommended the Hughes Company to

undertake the project, but for inexplicable reasons, the Ministry of Defence Procurement favoured the French Company. The cut off date that Hughes gave for accepting their quotation was 30th June and advance was to be paid by the same date. The Ministry started delaying the payment so that acceptance date for Hughes expired and by default the contract went to the French Company. The PAF received information that a senior retired PAF officer had gathered a few retired officers to handle the project after 30th June. The case was put up to the President on 25th June for his decision. He was surprised as to why Ministry was not accepting the Hughes' bid which was better in all respects! He ordered the Minister of Finance to accept Hughes' bid and advance money was to be sent by 26th June; thus ended the drama of this big project. I may point out that a few years later the French also undertook automation of their air defence system but they did not venture to do it all by themselves. They gave 33% to Hughes, 33% to a British company and they kept 33% to themselves. We nearly became guinea-pigs for their system. This blatant manoeuvring by retired PAF officers, in league with the Ministry of Defence Procurement, to give the project to the French Company, knowing full well that it was inferior in all respects to the US Company was flabbergasting. The negative spin-off of giving the contract to the American Company instead of French one was that many agents and the retired officers were deprived of the share in the pie and made me their enemy, resulting in unending and baseless rumours. The automation equipment for the SOCs was received in 1982. The operational trials and debugging of system started in 1984 and continued till fully operational system was handed over to the PAF in late 1985. The last component of the automation system, the large screen displays (LSDs) were installed at all operational centres by end of 1985. These large screens enabled the senior commanders at Command Headquarters to monitor all actions of

the tactical commanders and their battle staff. This was the best low level air defence system in the world - the brain child of the PAF. Some other countries, which were faced with similar threat, followed our system for their air defence.

Access to AHQ by Retired Officers

I issued the following directive to DCAS (Administration) on above-mentioned subject for dissemination to all concerned:

"A large number of retired PAF officers, employed by various commercial enterprises, are currently visiting the Air Headquarters and other PAF Bases and Units, ostensibly to meet old colleagues. However, the real purpose of such visits is, of course, to solicit business. Whilst I am delighted that these ex-P.A.F. officers have found a gainful vocation, their unrestricted access to the PAF organizations and meetings with the serving officers would inevitably lead to a conflict of interest. Certain cautionary measures, therefore, are called for. I appreciate that it is neither possible nor desirable to stop the normal social contacts between the retired officers on social visits to PAF establishments; they must be made welcome and treated with due courtesy. I am mainly concerned with restricting the access of those retired officers who are engaged in business with the PAF. It must be recognized that business propositions based on an appeal to old ties could sway the loyalties of the serving officers. The retired officers seeking our contracts, therefore, must also be subject to the regulations applicable to all businessmen with commercial dealings with the PAF. Consequently, the existing orders which regulate access to the PAF premises and use of PAF facilities by the retired officers should be amplified and made more stringent and must specify a code of conduct for officers on LPR (leave prior to retirement)."

Professional Training of Weapons Controllers

During 1965 and 1971 Wars, I realised that to a pilot, there were two most important people in the PAF. One was the man who serviced his aircraft and the other was the air defence weapons controller (ADWC). The latter was, in fact, his long range eyes which warned him of enemy aircraft present in the area and to position him for a kill. He knew he was in safe hands when he recognized their voices on radio, and over the years talking to them in the messes they had developed an esprit de corps amongst each other. I therefore instructed DCAS (Operations) to attach two air defence controllers to each course at Combat Commanders' School. The first combined course commenced on 24th January 1979. These controllers were to attend the course, listen to briefings, be the controllers during flying missions and attend the debriefings. They were also required to remain in the squadron to take part in all the 'gup-shups' (yarns). The training of pilots and controllers together was very successful and appreciated by pilots as well as controllers.

Exercise 'Jetstream-79'

This was second PAF wide exercise started on 7th September to 23rd September 1979. It was on the same pattern as that of Exercise 'Jetstream-78' but the duration was 17 days as compared to the previous year's exercise of 8 days. It was more intense and coincided with the dates of 1965 War with India. A lot more lessons were learnt and all the systems started working in unison and the PAF was heading towards attainment of high operational readiness. In addition to Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff and Naval Chief and Vice Chief of Army Staff, the President General Zia-ul-Haq attended the exercise. He sent me the following message: "I was delighted, today, to attend

your annual exercise -- 'JETSTREAM'-79. In fact, it is after a fairly long time that I have attended your exercise. I was extremely pleased to notice that a lot of hard work has gone into this exercise in which the Air Force has experimented with new and challenging concepts. The credit for it doubtlessly goes to you and those who have worked on it. Please convey my genuine appreciation to all concerned, and particularly Air Defence Command at Chaklala and PAF Base Sargodha, where I witnessed a brilliant demonstration of professional skill."

Soon after the major exercise, on 14th August 1979, I was conferred the second highest military award, Hilal-i-Imtiaz (Military).

Additions to the PAF Inventory

The PAF had to retire F-104s the Mach 2 fighter, F86s and B-57s from service as a result of US embargo on spares support. It had to rely on Chinese F-6s and F-86Es for all its roles. Although these aircraft had sound capability in close support role, but the air force needed to acquire day and night strike power to fill the gap of F-86s and B-57s. There was also a gap in night air defence capability. In 1967, the gap was filled in by adding 24 Mirage-III fighters (including 3 recce versions); these were armed with Matra R-530 and 550 Magic air-to-air missiles. In 1970, 30 Mirage-5 were added. In 1975 10 more Mirages-III reconnaissance aircraft were acquired. In 1979 the final batch of 32 Mirages was inducted in the PAF. These were the more advanced version of Mirage-5 series and 12 of them were equipped with the Exocet anti-shipping missile mated to the Agave radar. In 1978, Air Headquarters requested the Americans to provide 20 T-38 trainer aircraft on lease to replace the T-33s which had become unsupportable because of non-availability of spares. T-38 was required to provide safe transition from T-37 to

the F-6s and Mirages. However this arrangement could not materialise and we therefore acquired additional 20 FT-5s from China to fill the gap. In early 1980s the first batch of Mirage-5 were updated with installation of new systems including the Litton LW-33 inertial navigation (INS). Since its inception in 1978, the Mirage Rebuild Factory at Kamra has been undertaking major over-haul of Mirages.

Durandal runway penetration bombs, made by French company Matra were included in the PAF weapon's inventory on 1st January, 1980. ('Durandal' was a mythical French sword.) The bomb was designed to destroy runways. These bombs were designed to be dropped from low altitudes. The bomb's trajectory is steepened by a parachute and when the bomb is nearly vertical, a booster rocket fires that accelerates it into the runway surface. The bomb explodes after it has penetrated the surface. This results in a crater that is large and difficult to repair in a short time. The damage caused by Durandal is worse than a bomb of comparable warhead. The rocket can penetrate up to 40 centimetres of concrete, and creates a crater 5 meters deep and approximately 16 meters in diameter. The normal iron bombs were not very effective as they would skip off after hitting the concrete surface if dropped at a shallow angle.

Miscellaneous Achievements – 1980

On 19th April Pakistan Air Force Women Association (PAFWA) Mujahida Academy was inaugurated at Peshawar. It will be discussed in greater detail in chapter on welfare activates in the PAF.

On 20th September PAF Intermediate College Peshawar was upgraded to degree level. This was in line with my very first directive that I issued after assuming command of the PAF.

On 8th November F-6 Rebuild Factory (F-6RF) was inaugurated at Kamra. This factory would save a lot of foreign exchange and reduce turn-around of aircraft. Also, it would be a welcome addition towards self reliance. Kudos for this set up to AVM Saeed.

F-6 aircraft was modified to carry powerful 68mm French rockets in place of Chinese 57mm rockets thereby increasing the punch during ground support missions.

Efforts to Educate PAF Officers

I issued the following directive on above mentioned subject to all Base Commanders and senior staff officers: "In the profession of arms, as indeed in every human endeavour, intellect alone is the prime motive force. All the profound military thinkers, from Sun Tzu to some of the great captains of contemporary conflicts, consider intellectual attainment as the principal requisite for high command and hence the well known dictum: "Battles are won and lost in the mind of the commanders." It is, therefore, the duty of every officer to widen his intellectual horizon by constant study and application.

The first and foremost requirement is to keep abreast of all the latest developments in the specialized fields. Advances in sinews of war influence mode of application of military power and sound knowledge about these is essential for effective employment of available weapon systems. As the officer progresses in his career, he must also acquire deep knowledge about the nature of human conflict, national security environment, and use of military means in support of national objectives. This would call for wider study, particularly of military history. The officer is also of course a leader of men and an honoured and productive member of the society. He must,

therefore, be fully aware of national history aspirations, ideological moorings, and socio-economic imperatives. In sum, only an educated officer can successfully discharge his obligation to the nation.

Every PAF officer, at various stages in his career, undergoes a number of courses, both professional and of wider content. Some general education schemes are also being conducted. These activities, however, have limited scope and objectives. The kind of education I consider essential for an officer cannot be acquired by attending service courses or obtaining degrees alone. It can be achieved only by extensive, diverse and continuous study. In inculcating the reading habit, the main difficulty lies in initiating the study process. Once the spirit of inquiry is aroused, the quest for knowledge becomes unending. People can be encouraged to study in a variety of ways. Generally, it helps if the process is commenced with professionally related studies. One method that comes to mind is the presentations on military history. Every officer, by turn could be asked to give regularly scheduled presentations on air operations conducted during some of the major past conflicts. I am certain the officers commanding could devise numerous other means to accomplish this most important objective. I would like officers commanding to encourage all officers under their command to study regularly and widely. At considerable expense to the public exchequer, we have established reasonably well-equipped libraries at every PAF Base. These facilities must be utilized effectively." Further efforts were made in this endeavour by establishing a book club. All officers were made members of this club. The training branch was tasked to get useful books printed, under licence, and issue those to all officers at a nominal cost. The efforts were made to inculcate habit of reading amongst officers and also to give

them an opportunity to have a library of their own after a few years. The books were chosen systematically to add to the knowledge of the readers. The books were chosen by a team of officers deputed for this task and approved by PSOs. I am sure this must have inculcated the habit of reading in many officers and those who did not pick up the habit were destined to remain illiterate by their own choosing.

On 4th March, 1980 I issued a directive to establish 'Bachelor of Business Administration Course' at PAF Staff College. This was also an effort to impart scientific management training to the officers. The directive was as follows:

"Whatever the perceived threat or the politico-military objectives, the quantum and the composition of Pakistan's defence forces, would essentially be determined by the country's economic strength. Although since inception Pakistan has had to face a grave military threat, our security ultimately rests upon a stable and prosperous society. Consequently, there were myriad and insistent demands on Pakistan's meagre economic resources. The quality of life of our people must be enhanced to counter divisive tendencies in the society. On the other hand, the modern weapon systems are becoming extremely complex and costly. Pakistan, therefore, would find it increasingly difficult to maintain an extensive military establishment. The effective employment of modern weapon system would also require highly educated, dedicated and motivated manpower. Since the armed forces are an extension of the society, our personnel could be expected to reflect contemporary economic compulsions and social awareness. The paternalistic leadership and the intuitive management style to which we have been accustomed would, therefore, no longer suffice and it is imperative that our commanders be trained in scientific management methods if our scarce material and human resources are to be effectively utilized to fulfil the PAF's mission."

Exercise 'Jetstream-1980'

The exercise was launched on 31st October for 16 days. It involved all combat aircraft, air defence units and all support elements at various bases in the country. I visited all bases and air defence units to see the operations which were noticeable for intense activity. Speaking of the objective of the exercise, I said that it was meant to give the participants an opportunity to try out their systems and weapons, especially the new inductions under simulated war conditions. The important feature of this exercise was the involvement of senior army and naval officer. The Chairman JCSC and the Chiefs of the two sister services accompanied me to the different operational centres. Promotion of inter-services cooperation has received maximum attention from 1978 onwards and Jetstream exercises have significantly contributed towards that goal. Corps Commanders and other senior Army Officers visited the PAF Command Operations Centre to familiarize them with the objectives and results of the exercise as well as the PAF's capability for tactical and air defence operations. They were briefed by the then Deputy Chief of the Air Staff (Operations), Air Vice Marshal Jamal Ahmed Khan, and the Air Officer Commanding Air Defence Command, Air Vice Marshal Khurshid Anwar Mirza. The Corps Commanders were informed about the new approaches to defence developed lately both in the domains of tactical air operations undertaken in the various phases of the Exercise, including the activities in support of the Army and Navy. In the order of the day on the conclusion of the exercise I congratulated all officers and men on their outstanding performance during the Exercise which was marked by their zeal, and professional skill. I urged every one to spare no effort to make PAF a dauntless and hard hitting force, second to none and ever ready to meet all challenges.

Creation of Regional Commands

I was always of the opinion that wars are won or lost by the armies. They have to hoist the country's flag on the ground to claim the conquered land. In this endeavour the air force plays a vital role to achieve the objectives. No army can win war without the air force, especially if an opponent has an effective air force. However, if an air force wins an air war but army loses the ground war then winning an air war is of no significance. Therefore, it is a joint responsibility of three services to achieve the aim of defending the Fatherland. However, the role of the air force needs further explanation and calls for understanding by the other services as how best it can provide support to the two sister services.

The function of policy formulation and the monitoring of its execution remained with the Air Headquarters until 1980. The PAF had grown to a good size tactical air force with strategic role as well. But we had no field formations to liaise with the Army Corps and Naval Fleet to carry out execution of policies of Air Headquarters. Since the Army trains and fights wars at Corps level, and the Navy at Fleet level, for that reason the Air Headquarters had to provide liaison to the Corps and Fleet through their respective Headquarters. As a consequence of this incongruous and circuitous approach, the coordination and close understanding between the fighting elements of the three services did not develop. This weakness was highlighted in two wars with India and had led to avoidable set backs in the war operations. I consequently decided to form three Regional Operational Commands in the PAF ie, Northern Air Command at Peshawar, Central Air Command at Sargodha, and Southern Air Command at Karachi to cover the three geographical locations. Such a big change in the organization in the PAF no doubt required extensive

support and authorization by the government. It was therefore decided to establish operational necessity for such a change and then approach the government for sanctioning the reorganization. On experimental basis PAF set up Southern Air Command at PAF Base Masroor within its resources on 25th January 1981 under the command of ever exuberant Air Commodore Wiqar Azim as AOC Southern Air Command. He did an excellent job by having in-depth discussions with his counter-parts in the Army and the Navy. We also launched Exercise Jetstream-1981 on 8th May to 19th May 1981 to acquire feed back on the liaison between the three services. It was a huge success and feed back from the Corps Commanders and Fleet Commander was extremely positive. Armed with these positive reports from Corps Headquarters and Fleet Headquarters, Air Headquarters approached the government for establishing the three commands on permanent basis. Formal government approval for creation was received on 17th May 1982 for the Northern Air Command, and Central Air Command was established on 1st July 1981. The Southern Air Command was already functioning at Masroor since 25th January 1981 and was given a permanent status.

Policy formulation, and direction and control of the PAF were retained with Air Headquarters in consonance with the principle of the indivisibility of Air Power. The conduct of operational training and liaison with lower formation of other services was to form the basic task of the Regional Air Commands. The span of control and the tasks assigned to Regional Air Command were: To exercise operational and functional control over the specified bases and satellites, Sector Headquarters, Early Warning and Ground Control Interception units (GCIs), Sub-Control Centres, Mobile Observation Units (MOUs), Surface to Air Missile (SAMs) and Balloon Wings. In addition Ack-Ack of the Pak Army and Navy and Janbaz Forces

were to be integrated into the air defence system. During peace time, conduct all air operations in accordance with the policies of Air Headquarters, and coordinate tactical operations with Army and Navy formations in their respective areas of responsibility. The Air Commands were to review, and when needed, evolve new tactics and concept of operations, and suggest organization changes. In war, each Air Command would operate as a Regional Battle Headquarters and the Chief of the Air Staff will assume direct command and control of all PAF resources in order to fully exploit the flexibility of the available air power.

Southern Air Command

AOC Southern Air Command Air Commodore Wiqar Azim had set the pace for working of Air Commands. In fact it became a model organization for other Commands to follow regarding inter-services cooperation. It has been closely interacting with Corps Headquarters and Fleet Headquarters during subsequent Jetstream Exercises; and Southern Air Command also took part in many small exercises with Corps in the South and the Naval Fleet. For information, Southern Air Command's span of control also included defence of all of Balochistan.

Northern Air Command

The headquarters of Northern Air Command were established at Peshawar. For monitoring air defence operations in its area of responsibility, Sector operations centre at Sakesar was first linked with Northern Air command in manual mode but later it was linked with the automated Sector Operation Centre North at Chaklala. Soon after its setting up, the Northern Air Command was fully involved in hot situation involving active air

operations. On the eastern front it faced the challenging task of defending the Kahuta Complex against possible surprise air strike by the enemy. This involved round the clock vigil, high Air Defence Alert (ADA) status, random Combat Air Patrols (CAPs) and highest alert of state of surface to air missiles. A colossal effort was invested in terms of total effort being used up to safeguard the national asset because it was located at an indefensible site which was only three minutes flying time of the enemy aircraft from their border. Surprisingly PAF was not consulted when choosing the site; the PAF would have suggested a more secure site. I shall write more about the defence of Kahuta later. The Western front of the Northern Air Command had been active since 1979 Russian intervention in Afghanistan. The hot pursuit operations by Russo-Afghan Air force across Pakistan border with all types of aircraft forced the PAF to conduct wartime air operations in peace time. This border remained very active till the Russians were defeated and withdrew from Afghanistan.

Central Air Command

Central Air Command was assigned different peacetime and wartime roles. Its peacetime role was to establish and maintain close contact with the Army at senior command level to facilitate mutual understanding of each other's operational environments, plans, and tasks. The Command was also to concentrate on achieving the highest possible operational efficiency of the combat elements and related resources placed under its jurisdiction. The wartime role of the Central Air Command was to operate as regional battle headquarters as an extension of the Chief of the Air Staff's Command Operations Centre. The Central Air Command started functioning with effect from 1st July 1982.

Consequent to the change of organizational restructuring, the air defence elements in the field were placed under the Regional Air Commands while Air Defence Command was left with monitoring functions only. Any overlapping of responsibilities in the new system, were sorted out by Air Headquarters and every one became cognizant of their roles in the reorganization of the Command Structure of the PAF.

13
PAF at the Cutting Edge

Dilemma of Defending Kahuta

In late 1979, I was called by President Zia-ul-Haq to discuss air defence of our nuclear assets at Kahuta. He had reliable information that India was planning to attack and destroy our assets at Kahuta and present it as fait accompli to the ill wishers of Pakistan. I told the President that Kahuta was a totally indefensible site because it was three minutes flying time from the border whereas our reaction time was about 8 minutes. By the time our aircraft reach the area the enemy after having completed the job would be safe in their territory. I said that apart from enhanced passive defence measures, which in my opinion would not be able to defend the Vital Point (VP) because of use of stand off weapons. The logical question he asked was, "How to safeguard the most vital deterrent in our armoury in that case?" I replied, "Sir, get us the most modern aircraft along with latest weapons, and we will destroy their advanced nuclear facility at Trombay as quid pro quo, if they embark upon this rash course of action. We will inflict more damage to them than they can do to us." I added that threat of retaliation will stop them undertaking such a dangerous step. He asked which aircraft you have in mind. I replied we have done our

home work and in our analysis F-16 aircraft, with the latest weapons, is the best and most suited to fulfil our needs. This aircraft will also meet our needs to defend against the Russian threat on our western border. While discussing he asked, "What happens if the Americans put embargo on sale and supply of aircraft and spare parts as they have done in the past?" I said that we plan to buy two years spare parts as war reserves, and if ever they impose an embargo we can keep the aircraft flying for many years. The spares are also available from vendors but at higher cost. The only major effect of embargo is that any improvements in the aircraft performance are not passed on to user. However, safety matters are notified and made available despite the embargo. We would also intend to purchase advanced workshop facilities so that we can extend the life of aircraft in Pakistan. I said no country in the world manufactures the whole aircraft at one place; the trend now is to get parts manufactured from which ever country it is cheaper to do so. If we buy aircraft from Europe, and if the makers of that aircraft have used parts made in America, the Americans, in all likelihood, will apply an embargo on the sale of that aircraft. I told him that we had short listed two types of aircraft. One was F-16 and the other was Mirage-2000 from France. The Mirage-2000 was also good but not better than F-16. Besides French aircraft was far more expensive than the F-16 and spares support was even more expensive because too few aircraft had been built till then. For this reason, there were not many buyers of this aircraft. The price difference was very high, ie F-16 cost thirteen and a half million dollars per fully loaded aircraft whereas Mirage-2000 was almost double the price for a similar configuration.

After listening to the briefing he said that he was scheduled to visit USA next year but he added that he was not very hopeful while Mr Carter was the President. He added that we would have better chances to get the F-16s when Mr Reagan assumed the

Presidency the following year. I told the President that with present aircraft in our inventory we could launch a retaliatory attack but the pilots in all likelihood would have to eject when they run out of fuel. The President having satisfied himself with the problem and the solution told me to visit Kahuta and suggest any additional passive defence measures.

Soviet Union Invades Afghanistan

In 1979 Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan with full might. The war posed complex social, economic, psychological, political and defence problems for Pakistan. Militarily, Pakistan had always planned for the threat on her eastern front. The government asked the PAF and the Army to use their resources to stem the tide on the western front and, at the same time, not to reduce vigilance on the eastern border. The PAF found itself ill-prepared for this task because it had hardly any infrastructure to make effective presence on the western border. It had only two airfields at Peshawar and Quetta which were very close to the border. For air defence especially, the low looking radars could not be effectively deployed due to the problems of hilly terrain and logistics. The PAF urgently needed modern weapons to deal effectively with threat from across the border especially airborne warning and control system (AWACS). The frequent air violations of Pakistan's airspace to attack and harass Afghan refugees built up pressure on the PAF to meet the threat.

The Soviet invasion had seemingly caught the Americans by surprise although satellite photographs would have revealed the build up of forces across Oxus River also known as Amu Darya. Be that as it may, the invasion of Afghanistan was a reality and the only reaction by Mr Carter's administration was in his State of the Union Address on 23rd January 1980 in which he said: "Any

attempt by an outside force to gain control of Persian Gulf region will be regarded as an assault on the vital interests of the United States of America." The statement showed that American vital interest was the Gulf region and not Afghanistan. However this invasion did trigger the development of Rapid Deployment Force by Americans. The main hurdle for not addressing the issue of Soviet invasion of Afghanistan by President Carter's administration was the defeat in Vietnam. The Vietnam syndrome had put the American administration in inaction mode to undertake any venture not directly threatening their vital interest. From hindsight I can say that only after the change of administration in Washington and assumption of the office of the Presidency by a pro-active President Reagan, the logjam in the American thinking was undone and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan became a primary concern in the United States.

US Change of Heart

The sudden change in the geo-strategic environment made the Carter administration belatedly realise the importance of Pakistan because it was the only route to Afghanistan. The other route via Iran was out of question because of deep animosity between the two countries. The American government sent a delegation to Pakistan comprising of Dr Zbigniew Brzezinski, the National Security Advisor, and Mr Warren Christopher, Deputy Secretary of State in February 1980 to negotiate an aid package and for renewal of enduring friendship by reaffirming the 1959 defence agreement with Pakistan, giving it vitality. However on enquiry by the Pakistani team if the United States would be prepared to upgrade the 1959 agreement to the level of a binding treaty, the answer was – 'not possible'. The United States offered a $ 400 million economic and military aid package

spread over a period of eighteen months but Pakistan declined the offer for two reasons: Firstly it was not adequate and secondly it was being tied to our nuclear technology. The failure of talks was conveyed by General Zia to President Carter on telephone to inform him that the aid package offered was not enough to enhance Pakistan's defence capability. The main reasons of failure were that the American government was too sensitive to Indian reaction and also tried to tie it to nuclear technology that Pakistan was trying to develop. Washington was rather surprised and hurt by Pakistan's refusal of the aid package in spite of her pressing needs. When a foreign correspondent asked President Zia reasons for rejection of aid package he replied: "When the Soviet weapons are breathing fire on Pakistan's border, what can we buy with that meagre amount to enhance national security?" He himself replied: "Peanuts!" The President meant no disrespect to Mr. Carter who happened to be a peanut farmer; however the media took fancy to the word 'peanuts' and it became part of journalism in rather inappropriate usage. Deputy Secretary of State again visited Pakistan to convey United States' desire to strengthen bilateral relations if Pakistan would hold back on her nuclear programme. Once again Pakistan did not accept the offer.

When in October 1980 President Zia, as Chairman of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, went to USA to address the United Nations General Assembly he had a meeting with President Carter on 3rd October 1980 in his office. The meeting took place in quite a pleasant atmosphere. During this meeting President Zia did not discuss economic or security issues with the host; however, President Carter broached the issue and offered to provide F-16s to Pakistan. President Zia thanked President Carter and said, "I do not wish to burden you with Pakistan's problems at a time when you are pre-occupied in an election campaign. Let us defer this issue till

after the US elections." President Carter had misjudged Pakistan's likely response when he tried to take advantage of Pakistan's economic and military compulsions to force her into accepting the help on entirely American terms. Had Mr. Carter been successful in forthcoming Presidential elections in 1980, Pakistan would have faced many difficulties dealing with the democratic government under President Carter.

On return to Pakistan President Zia called me to tell me not to worry. The PAF will get the F-16s because in all likelihood Mr. Reagan was going to win the elections and he added that the Republicans have better grasp of the geo-strategic realities in the world because they are outward looking as compared to the Democrats; besides, Mr Reagan hated the Soviets because of their communist philosophy. The Republicans won the election and Mr. Reagan took over the Presidency of America, Mr George Bush became the Vice President and General Haig took over as Secretary of State. General Haig had a better grasp of geo-strategic settings of South Asia as a result of Soviet take over of Afghanistan and possibly beyond. After crossing a lot of hurdles the final package of $3.2 billion was agreed in September 1981 for economic and military aid spread over years 1982-7. However the Congress approved the agreement subject to the condition that assistance to Pakistan would be suspended if Pakistan transferred a nuclear device to any non-nuclear state or received a nuclear device from any country or detonated such a device. The Congress was assured by the US administration that the aid would not upset the military balance between India and Pakistan. Pakistan made it very clear to US administration that she would not grant bases on her soil. There were other issues raised by US administration but Pakistan conveyed her reservations through diplomatic channels. On some issues however both countries decided to work together.

Hard Bargaining

In November 1981 a team headed by Mr James Buckley, US Under-Secretary of State came to Pakistan to discuss nuts and bolts of the military package. While they were discussing this at President Zia's residence at night, Mr. Buckley disclosed that instead of F-16s the administration was offering F-5E followed by F-5G, a brand new aircraft. I had flown that aircraft in America but found it unsuitable for our needs. It was good aircraft for point air defence of VPs, similar to F-6 aircraft. In fact it was designed as fighter interceptor therefore it lacked load carrying capacity; also it carried less fuel on board, consequently it had short range and endurance. What we were looking for was a multi-role aircraft. After flying the aircraft I told the President of the company why they were naming it as F-5G, as if it was a derivative of F-5s. In fact it was a totally different aircraft. Later they renamed the F-5G to F-20 (Tiger Shark) and they sent me a letter to acknowledge my suggestion. Coming back to the meeting at the President's residence, when they were insisting on giving F-5Es to be augmented by F-5Gs later on, the President told them that he would enquire from the Air Chief about his opinion on the type of aircraft. President Zia woke me up at 1145 pm on green line, to ask my opinion regarding alternate choice to F-16s they were offering. I straight away told the President to say 'no' to any aircraft other than F-16s. The President conveyed my answer to them. Thereafter Mr Buckley talked to Mr Haig, to inform him of my decision. Mr Haig then asked Mr Buckley what PAF wanted and when he learnt that it was none other than the F-16, he immediately agreed. That was it. I think this must have taken about 20 minutes and I received happy news from the President. He said, "You have got F-16s." That, no doubt, was the happiest news not only for the PAF but also for Pakistan;

Almighty God had ensured that our nuclear assets would remain safe and we would be able to match the Soviet aircraft on our western front. Next day, training of personnel and time frame for induction of F-16s was discussed. The team leader said that the induction time would be three years. I said "No; we will induct them in one year." The team leader said that except for Israelis who took 42 months all others took 48 months. I said I cannot guess as to why they took so long but I can induct one squadron in 12 months. He was rather surprised to hear that from the Air Chief of a third world country. He further said that the aircraft production itself takes about 4 years. I told him that we can not wait for that time frame as our requirement was urgent because of the Soviet threat on our western borders. I told him that our Mirages were no match to their latest aircraft and therefore we needed to find a solution immediately. I suggested that the USAF might consider giving aircraft from its own inventory. He again insisted that induction could not be done in less than 42 months. When I remained adamant in my stance he said in that case would I like to make a bet? I agreed and he proposed a crate of whiskey! The acquisition of first batch of aircraft was solved by the team suggesting that six aircraft belonging to Belgium Air Force were on final stages of production line and would be ready in less than a year. Would Pakistan like to negotiate with them to transfer those in our favour? Since we were worried about security of nuclear assets and the Soviet threat, it was a God sent opportunity to have the aircraft in less than a year. The deal was negotiated by Governments of Pakistan and Belgium through Americans and they agreed to let us have those six aircraft but we had to pay a premium of $6 million per aircraft. Though the cost was high but opportunity cost benefit to us was even higher. By getting 6 F-16s one year earlier meant that by the time other aircraft would arrive in Pakistan, we would have enough pilots to

fly them. Also six aircraft with fully operational pilots and most modern air-to-ground weapons meant total safety of our assets. A clause that I insisted to be included in final agreement was that F-16 for Pakistan would be equipped with the same equipment and specifications as that of F-16s belonging to the United States Air Force. Later this clause came in handy when some substitute equipment was suggested but we enforced the mutually agreed clause in the agreement.

PAF Gets Bulk Share of Aid

The government decided to divide the aid package of $3.2 billion by allotting $2 billion to the armed forces and $1.2 billion for economic uplift of the country. The armed forces were allotted more in view of Soviet attack on Afghanistan. A meeting of Joint Chief's Committee was called to decide the allotment of funds according to the requirements of the forces. It was chaired by General Muhammad Iqbal the Chairman JCC, Admiral Niazi, Chief of Naval Staff, the Chief of the Air Staff (self), General Sawar Khan, Vice Chief of the Army Staff and Secretary General Defence, Major General Rahim Khan. The President General Zia-ul-Haq always attended the meetings as Chief of the Army Staff. With the Chairman's permission, I told them that I would like to say a few words on the subject before we discussed the subject of allotment of funds amongst the three services. The Chairman agreed to let me start the discussion. I said that if we allotted the amount, which ever way, it would not make any one service superior to the respective Indian service. However if the PAF was given the maximum funds to buy high-tech 40 F-16s we would be able to establish technical superiority over the Indian Air Force. I added that if the audience recalled, in 1965 War we only had 10 F-104s and they made all the difference.

With the fleet of 40 aircraft we would completely dominate the combat arena. I assured them that this superiority would remain with us for next 10 to 15 years. Besides we would be able to attack their vital target with impunity ie, the India nuclear assets as quid pro quo, if they attacked Kahuta. With the latest air-to-ground weapons and high-tech defensive and offensive equipment on board, our pilots would have no difficulty in accomplishing the mission. They asked very similar questions that the President had asked earlier in my one-on-one meeting with him. I gave appropriate answers to their questions. To my surprise, they all agreed with my suggestion. They agreed to make the PAF technically superior to IAF and added that at least one force would be superior to their services. It was inter-services understanding and cooperation at its best and also spoke highly of the sagacity of the Chiefs. I also said that we had planned to purchase the aircraft through FMS (Foreign Military Sales) so as to eliminate the agents. The Army and Navy Chief's said that they would also purchase their equipment through FMS. Since they all knew the advantages of buying through FMS, hence I did not have to dilate on that subject. However for the general reader I will write briefly what is FMS and its modus operandi and the judicial authority it has. This I feel all the more necessary because of baseless rumours. The rumours have circulated because of lack of understanding and cynical feelings of frustrated and sick minds.

Foreign Military Sales (FMS)

When a contract is executed to purchases weapons through FMS, it means that deal is made between Governments and therefore no agents are allowed. This is guaranteed by the US Government. In fact the Secretary of State of America is

required to report to Congress of any unlawful activity. If the buyers suspect any wrong doing, they can request the US Government to carry out investigation and if any foul play is established, the CEO and the Directors of the Company are liable for prosecution. The rules for FMS are available from American Department of Defence Purchase. I am proud to have saved millions of dollars of my country by purchasing via FMS. I went to visit the company and during dinner hosted by the President of the company in my honour, said that it was the cleanest deal they ever signed with any country outsides the USA. That was the finest moment of my career. The dinner was attended by late Lieutenant General Ejaz Azim, the Ambassador of Pakistan, and some officers of the Pakistan Embassy. Since international as well as local agents and connected people, were deprived of a very large amount of money as fees for agents and those facilitating the deal, all ganged up to float all sorts of rumours about me. It is a depressing thought to accept the fact that it is inconceivable on the part of majority of people in our country to accept that a deal can be done above board. It simply shows the make up of their own minds as what they would have done had they been in power and position to do so. In addition to savings on agents' fees, the other advantage was buying cheaper spares parts. This is because FMS procedures allow purchase of spares directly from manufacturers in bulk for all those who are integrated into the system. Also, FMS warehouses are located in USA, Europe and Far East from where spares are supplied to the requesting air force within 3 to 5 days of the notice. Therefore, the FMS affiliates did not need to over stock spares thus saving considerable funds. As I have earlier written that the Air Headquarters had chosen to buy F-16 and not Mirage-2000 after thorough evaluation. There was however very strong lobby reverberating in favour of Mirage-2000 in the government

circles. I am therefore writing the comparison of the two aircraft for the benefit of readers.

Comparison of F-16 and Mirage-2000

The F-16 and Mirage 2000 were the first production fighters to incorporate newest technologies involving radical concepts like inherently unstable design relying on computers and fly-by-wire flight controls to maintain controllability. The prototype YF-16 first flew in 1974 followed by the full-scale development F-16A in 1975. The Mirage 2000 was conceived in a later time-frame, with its specifications finalised in 1976 and, the prototype flew in 1978. The F-16A utilises a single Pratt & Whitney F-100-PW-220 engine that delivers 22,810 lbs of static thrust. Thus F-16 configured in the air-air role with two heat-seeking missiles and with full internal fuel (weighing 23,500 lbs) has a thrust-to-weight ratio of just over 1:1. Compared to this, the Mirage 2000 with a SNECMA M-53-P2 engine delivers 21,385 lbs static thrust. Thus in the air-air configuration (weighing 23,940 lbs) it has a thrust to weight ratio of 0.9. The superior performance of the F-16 in terms of acceleration and rate of climb in subsonic and transonic regimes is considerably superior to the Mirage 2000. In turning performance, this thrust advantage helps sustain tight turns, while the Mirage 2000 suffers a high drag rise due to its inherent high-drag delta design. The large wing of the Mirage 2000 confers a slight advantage by lowering its wing loading (aircraft weight per unit area) so that the instantaneous turn rates are slightly better than the F-16. The F-16s acquired by us had wide range sophisticated avionics such as the ALQ-131 ECM pod and the ALR-69 radar warning receiver. Apart from AIM-9L Sidewinder air-to-air missiles it had Thompson–CSF Atlis laser designator pods, a TV-type tracking system linked with a laser

illuminator. The PAF's F-16's were the first non-French aircraft to be equipped with the Atlis. The Indian Jaguars and later their Mirage-2000s were equipped with this system. In weapons carriage capability, the F-16 has an advantage, having a total of 9 stations for weapons and two for sensors compared to the Mirage 2000 which has 7 stations for weapons and two for sensors. (This shortcoming was, however, remedied in the later version Mirage 2000-5.) The radius of action of an F-16 is at least 20% greater than the Mirage 2000 with comparable loads. Both platforms have capability of delivering precision laser-guided weapons including bombs and missiles. The most important difference between the two aircraft did not have to do with performance, but the price. While the unit cost of the F-16 was to the tune of US $13.5 million per unit, including on board support equipment, the Mirage-2000 came in at US $25 million per aircraft without ancillaries. A fly-worthy Mirage-2000 would cost as much as US $30 million which was more than double that of an F-16. During final choice between the two aircraft, pricing was the key factor which swayed the decision in favour of the F-16 in Pakistan and also, world-wide procurement. The Indian factor was one of major concern in our decision making. This factor needs elaboration. We knew the Americans would not give the Indians the F-16s or the F-18s because of their very close links to Soviet aircraft industry. They were very apprehensive, during that time frame that their latest technology was likely to be passed on to Russians. The Indians did approach the Americans to purchase F-18s, but were told to buy Mirage-2000 instead, so as to maintain balance in the region. However, to mollify them, the Americans gave them generous economic aid so that they could buy Mirage-2000s. If we had opted for Mirage-2000, with the finances available to us, we would have been able to purchase about 20 aircraft where as the Indians

would have bought about 60+ Mirage-2000s thus negating our efforts to make the PAF technological superior force. Yet another point to be considered was that notwithstanding superior skill of pilots, the quantity creates its own quality. These factors undoubtedly weighed very heavily when we decided to go for the F-16s. The F-16 has proven to be the most agile jet fighter ever and its combat record in Pak-Afghan and several encounters in Middle East have attested the outstanding abilities of the F-16. The F-16A led to a more capable derivative in the shape of the F-16C, which has more advanced avionics and a more powerful engine. Commonality with the earlier model is of a high order and users of the F-16A can easily operate the F-16C. This has led to several countries receiving both types to suit their varied degrees of threat responses vis-à-vis weapons systems. The Mirage 2000, on the other hand, has not developed much beyond the -5 version which basically allowed carriage of 4 MICA missiles along with new radar. The price of the Mirarge-2000-5 has now reached to the tune of US$ 75 million per piece, which is a reason why the sales of this variant have not been widespread. Presently (as of 2008) F-16A/C is operated by Bahrain (22), Belgium (150), Chile (28), Denmark (69), Egypt (220), Greece (161), Jordan (58), Indonesia (10), Israel (322), Italy (34), Morocco (24), Netherlands (100), Norway (57), Oman (12), Pakistan (32), Poland (48), Portugal (45), Singapore (75), Taiwan (150), South Korea (180), Thailand (61), Turkey (270), UAE (80) and USA (1,245). The Mirage 2000 operators are France (315), India (69), UAE (68), Taiwan (60), Greece (44), Egypt (20), Qatar (12), Peru (12) and Brazil (12). The factors that emerge from the above were: (a) the performance of aircraft (b) the price aspect of the aircraft and the spare parts and (c) the Indian factor.

The Best Pilots and Ground Crew

The first batch of six F-16s was going to be delivered to us by end of 1982 and I had accepted the challenge to absorb them in one year. Therefore we had to select pilots to fly them and ground crew to service them. The Operations and Maintenance branches were tasked to put forward the names of pilots and aircraft technicians. I told the DCAS Maintenance to select technicians who had sound educational background and were known to absorb new technology quickly. The technical branch selected 87 ground technicians as I had directed. The DCAS (Operations) was told to select six pilots who had very high IQ grading, are top rated officers and have consistent high rating as pilots. After thorough research the DCAS (O) put up the following names: Wing Commanders Shahid Javed, and Ahmed Kuli Khattak, Squadron Leaders Shahid Lateef, Muhammad Owais, Sami Toor and Flight Lieutenant Muzaffar Ali. I read their reports and was satisfied with the meticulous selection. The conversion and operational training was for about 5 months and was to be completed by the end of 1982. We also decided that there was a need to train at least 4 more pilots in USAF so that we had a total of 10 to train pilots for two squadrons in Pakistan. We approached the USAF but they showed their inability to train more pilots. Since I was scheduled to visit America on an official visit, I decided to take up the issue with USAF Headquarters at that time. When I visited America in 1982, there were four points on my agenda. These were: (a) train 4 more pilots in USAF (b) electronic counter measures for F-16s (c) check progress of training of pilots and ground crew (d) visit General Dynamic's Factory where F-16s were being manufactured.

Visit to the US Air Force

During my visit I was had a meeting with General A Gabriel, Chief of Staff USAF, a very pleasant fighter pilot. I discussed with him regarding training of additional 4 pilots. He said that he had already checked up from Tactical Air Command and their answer was that they were unable to spare effort for some time. However he said since you are scheduled to visit Tactical Command to see PAF pilots undergoing training, you may discuss it with General Wilbur L Creech, Commander of Tactical Air Command. That was not a totally negative response and therefore there was chance we may be able train 4 additional pilots. A meeting was arranged to discuss Electronic Counter Measures (ECM) pod for our aircraft. According to the contract our aircraft were to be fitted with ALR-69 Radar Warning Receiver but the 'US National Defence Disclosure Committee (NDPC)' had intervened to stop the release of this critical item. The US therefore proposed to give us an earlier version, ALR-64 fitted on their F-4 Phantoms. The matter was strongly taken up by President Zia-ul-Haq with the United States Government. I also sought the help of Mr. Charles Wilson (of Charlie's War fame) Member, House of Representatives Appropriations Committee. Earlier, when he visited Air Headquarters in 1981, when America was not willing to give us F-16s, I told the Congressman that we were facing Russian threat of modern aircraft and we did not possess aircraft to match their threat. Therefore I said either you give us F-16s or we will not support you. This is mentioned in his Biography "Charlie's War" authored by George Crile. The Congressman assured me that Pakistan will get F-16s. It was a short meeting. I asked a simple question - what is written in the contract? When it was read out it said the F-16s for Pakistan will be fitted with the same ancillary equipment as that carried by USAF F-16s. There

was no further discussion on the subject. They agreed to follow the contract. I think the matter had been already settled to give the latest equipment for F-16s and my meeting was a mere formality. My next visit was scheduled to visit to Langley Air Base, the home of Tactical Air Command, to meet General Wilbur L Creech, the swash buckling fighter pilot, Commander of Tactical Air Command from 1978-1984. The General during his tenure had shaped the USAF of today with introduction of new weapons and decentralized authority and responsibility. No single officer has had greater influence on the doctrine of employment of air power in Tactical Operations in recent times than General Bill Creech. He transformed the way the Air Force conducts warfare. I had a very useful discussion on employment of the air power in tactical operations with him. I told him that I have also changed the Doctrine of Tactical Operations of our air force since 1981 by reorganizing the PAF in three Tactical Commands and consequently decentralising authority and responsibility for employment of Air Power in Tactical Operations. In our context we had transferred authority and responsibility to the Air Officers Commanding respective Commands. We had a lot of discussions on this subject since it was his pet subject and so was mine. During the meeting I thanked him for training of 6 pilots and put forth request for training of 4 additional pilots. I told him the rationale of the request was the threat on our western border of the Russian Air Force. The 6 pilots being trained at his base will be guarding the front on western border and therefore, would not be able to train pilots required to man the 40 F-16s that we have contracted for. He understood the logic of my request and very gladly agreed to train 4 additional pilots. He praised the skill and dedication of our pilots under training at Langley Air Base. He said that they are going to be a great asset to the PAF. I thanked him for helping us out of a difficult situation. Next, I met our 6

pilots converting on to F-16 aircraft. Our pilots were very happy with the training being imparted to them. Wing Commander Shahid Javed told me that after flying about 10 hours they started air combat training. He said they fared well in those exercises. Thereafter, he said three experts in air combat were brought to fly with us. He said their training was exactly on the same lines that were required by us. After spending a fruitful day and pleasant evening, I was taken to the base where our airmen were being trained. When I met the officer commanding and instructors they gave me the happy news that our airmen had attained a very high standard in a very short time. They were all praise for the skill and fast pick up of the expertise on F-16s, equipped with 4th generation technology. Although I expected this from our airmen but hearing from the US instructors was indeed very reassuring. I came back to Washington satisfied with the on time training of our ground crew. I met General Gabriel again and he told me that General Creech had informed him of his acceptance to train 4 additional pilots. He asked me how I had convinced him. I replied it was simply a request from a fighter pilot to a fighter pilot.

F-16s Land at Sargodha

On 14th January 1983, six F-16s landed at Sargodha in the evening. They were flown in by our pilots. Since I was out of the country they were received by the Acting Air Chief and a host of journalists and guests with great fanfare. It appeared that that not only the PAF but the whole nation got a boost. The despondency that had set in after the loss of East Pakistan was erased to a large extent and new mood was set in to look beyond that disaster. Paintings of F-16s were seen on trucks plying on roads in the country and in Afghanistan. On my return from abroad we held a ceremony to equip No 11 Squadron with F-16s. The

ceremony was held on 27th January 1983. The Chief Guest was President of Pakistan, General Zia-ul-Haq. The other guests were the Chairman JCSC, General Muhammad Iqbal, Admiral Tariq Kamal, the Chief of the Naval Staff, General Sawar Khan the Vice Chief of the Army Staff. In addition, the Ministers, concerned Secretaries of the Government and prominent citizens were present. The media had a large representation. In my welcome address I said that this day marked a quantum jump in the domain of technology not only for the PAF but also for Pakistan. The induction of F-16s was characterized by enhancement of our defensive and offensive capability in the country. I told the invited guests that by the Grace of God we had absorbed them in less than a year - the commitment I made to the United States team who were insisting on a time frame of 42 to 48 months. This firm commitment was made by me in the presence of President of Pakistan and today I stand vindicated. An impressive show was put up by the pilots for the guests. After the show, No 11 Squadron was equipped with F-16s and Wing Commander Shahid Javed was appointed as Squadron Commander. The President then addressed the gathering. I am reproducing below the copy of the letter that he wrote to me which sums up what he said during his address:

"I am writing this to express my appreciation of the F-16s induction ceremony held at Sargodha on 27 January 1983. It was really a pleasure to witness a ceremony that was simple yet impressive. I also wish to thank you and the Base Commander for the hospitality that was extended to the prominent citizens, my colleagues and me on this occasion. With the induction of this weapon system, as you very rightly observed in your speech, the PAF has taken a quantum jump in the field of technology. I am hopeful that the PAF will make the maximum use of this superiority in enhancing its operational capabilities. As I

mentioned in my speech, we are very proud of our Air Force, and we have a lot of trust and confidence in this Service. The nation very rightly now expects a much higher standard of performance from the PAF than in the past. I wish our Air Force all the success and pray for all the glories that it may have in the service of the nation. I am writing separately to Farooq (Base Commander) as well. However, I would be grateful if you could convey these sentiments to the Base Commander Sargodha and to 11 Squadron and also my appreciation to them for putting up an impressive show. As a token of my appreciation, I am enclosing three sets of Tafheem-ul-Quran for Base Commander, Air Commodore Farooq F Khan, Parade Commander, Wg Cdr Khattak, and the pilot of the F-16 aircraft who performed so admirably while displaying the manoeuvrability of the F-16 aircraft."

Afghan Air War

Once we acquired the F-16s, PAF's involvement in the Afghan air war became fruitful. However, throughout the war, the PAF was required to operate under stringent 'Rules of Engagement' (ROE). The government forbade us to fly in 'hot pursuit' across the borders and the PAF pilots were not allowed to shoot any aircraft unless the pilot was sure that that the debris of the enemy aircraft would fall within Pakistan territory. The Russian pilots carried out hit and run type of missions. The intermittent radar pickup and short tracks made it very difficult to intercept these raids. The PAF however rose to the occasion and deployed its F-16s to the maximum limits allowed by the government. It had to fly daily Combat Air Patrols (CAPs), at a very high rate, to deter and deny penetration of hostile aircraft harassing the Mujahideen. However many a raid was not intercepted because of the uncertainty of debris falling on the

Pakistani side of the border as per rules laid down by the government. The F-16s were inducted in time and also, Kamra Air Base was developed as a full time flying base and commissioned on 12th February 1984. Kamra became an effective platform for basing and launching the F-16s for the western as well as north-eastern threat. That minimised the menace of air intrusion to a large extent. Although we repeatedly asked for Airborne Warning and Control System (AWACS), but the US refused to release these aircraft to us. The PAF operating under the most difficult and strict rules of engagement played a significant role in bringing about the end of Soviet invasion in Afghanistan and is proud of its contribution to the war.

During the period 1986-89, the PAF shot down five intruding Soviet and Afghan aircraft, including three Su-22s, one Su-25 and one An-24, the latter a likely Elint aircraft on a spying mission. The PAF once again proved that it could respond to any challenge.

Defence of National Assets

I wrote a letter to the President regarding the task given to me to defend Kahuta. I stated that, "I am now in a position to confirm that Indians will not attack Kahuta because it is amply clear to them that we will retaliate and launch an attack on their atomic station at Trombay, as a quid pro quo, and knowing that they will suffer much more devastation than us, will desist from taking any unwise action".

To inform the Indians I told Mr Munir Hussain, Secretary Science and Technology, who was going abroad to attend an international conference on atomic energy, to inform his Indian counterpart Mr Bhabha that he should apprise his government of consequences of any adventure to attack our nuclear assets.

When he told Mr Bhabha, he replied 'no Bhai (brother) we know your capability and we will not undertake such a mission'.

I also requested General Sahibzada Yaqub, our Foreign Minister, to declare, at an appropriate time, our intentions to retaliate if any action is undertaken against our nuclear assets. I think he did that while he was in New York. I also invited senior editors of newspapers to inform them of the capability that we had acquired and consequently safeguarded our nuclear assets. They asked very pertinent questions and I answered them. I recall the presence of Mr Majid Nizami and Mr Mushahid Hussain. As expected the news was published in Indian news papers the next day.

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Maintaining the Tactical Advantage

As a follow up to the letter of appreciation by the President, I sent a directive to all base commanders and staff officers to put in extra efforts to prove equal to what the nation expects from us. It read:

"Whereas such recognition should make us justifiably proud of ourselves, it should also make us conscious of the new dimension that has been added to our responsibility. Addition of one of the latest weapon systems to its inventory would mark the beginning of a new era in the life of any dynamic Air Force. In case of the PAF it is a turning point. The job of coping with the requirements of a fast changing technological environment and the dictates of living in a region, affairs of which are in a state of flux, is a complex process. It involves not only the induction of new weapon systems but also maximizing the performance of those already in use. The period of transition is likely to be fraught with many mental and physical barriers. One of the responsibilities of a commander at this juncture should be to infuse a spirit of change and carry his subordinates forward at a pace compatible with the changing requirements of the time. The

PAF can take pride in its many achievements and can boast of the numerous advances that it has made over the years. Induction of a weapon system as sophisticated as the F-16, procured at phenomenal cost, is an enormous responsibility that would require unprecedented efforts on our part. The nation, today, has good reason to have far greater expectations from our Service. The President has, thus, in his letter rightly echoed the sentiments of the Government and the people of Pakistan. It now depends entirely on us how best we gear our human and material resources and rise to the expectations of the nation. I would, therefore, like you to inculcate among the personnel under your command an unambiguous awareness of the added responsibility that now rests on their shoulders. Needless to say that such awareness can only be cultivated through wise guidance, concerted training and unflagging motivation."

Inter-Services Cooperation

There were some advocates of a strange policy who were putting forward the notion that being a small service facing a very large enemy, the PAF may not be in a position to spare as much effort as needed by the sister services. Though this was the factual position, prior to re-equipment of the PAF in late sixties, but it was taken too literally by the other services advocating the assumed notion that the 'PAF will be fighting its own battle.' When I assumed the command of the PAF, I decided to address the issue and to come up with clear cut policy. During my annual talks to National Defence College, the Staff Colleges of the three services and the War College, I advocated that a war is won or lost by the army; therefore the PAF will support the army in achieving the mutual goal. However, the quantum of this support would be decided by the PAF planners in coordination with the

Army counterparts. I am sure that these talks and subsequently during joint planning, it became very obvious that the war was a joint responsibility. Here I would like to mention that after hearing my first talk to War College when General Mirza Aslam Beg was the Chief Instructor, he along with the class gave me a standing ovation for what I advocated as the PAF's role during planning and operations. It was a rare honour.

I must, however, add that there had been persistent misgivings pertaining to planning and operations in the wake of the 1971 war. Some senior officers of Pak Navy tried to shift blame, for any setback during period of war, on to the PAF knowing fully well that PAF was not given funds to acquire equipment to support the Navy, especially for night and adverse weather operations. This had been fully documented and every one concerned was aware of lack of proper wherewithal in the PAF to support the Navy. In the post-war analysis the PAF also realized that being a supporting service, it will always be blamed for any failures on the part of any one of the sister services. I must point out that Pak Army, in both wars (1965 and 1971) never blamed the PAF for any reverse they may have experienced; in fact, they highly praised the support given by the PAF which was much beyond what had been committed during joint planning, recognizing the resources available to the air force. Adequate provision of weapons and proper balance of the forces to meet threat is the joint responsibility of the three services under the guidance of the Government. The wars need to be fought together at Joint Command Operations Centre where the Chairman and the Service Chiefs sit in their own cabins, along with their staff, and oversee tactical and strategic forces engaged in fighting a war. With the reorganization of the PAF into Operational Commands, resulting in delegation of tactical operations to Air Officers of respective Commands, the

Air Chief is able to now sit with his colleagues to oversee the conduct of war. However the search for more effective teamwork among the armed forces should remain a dominant task in the future as the nation's military and political organizations come to grip with new set of strategic challenges that we are likely to face in the present century.

Co-location of Services Headquarters

In almost all countries of the world, the headquarters of three services are located in the capital along with the government. This is required for better planning and coordination of Joint Headquarters, the three Armed Forces together with the relevant Government Ministries to meet the external challenges facing a country. At the time of partition in 1947, Pakistan established its capital in Karachi. Pak Navy and PAF also logically located their Headquarters at Karachi. The General Headquarters was established at Rawalpindi for lack of adequate accommodation in Karachi; also it was the most appropriate place from the defence point of view for it was visualized that if ever there was war between India and Pakistan, the centre of gravity of the war will be in Punjab. Later, when Karachi was fast becoming an industrial city, it was decided to shift the Capital to Islamabad. Soon after that Pak Navy, very wisely, shifted their Headquarters to Islamabad but the Air Headquarters was shifted to Peshawar for want of accommodation at Islamabad/Rawalpindi. This location was not suitable because the PAF was 100 miles away from the seat of the Government and the two services that it had to support during likely future wars. There was no doubt the Air Chief had no difficulty in attending briefings and functions at Rawalpindi, because of aircraft at his disposal, however it was not easy for the staff officers, who had to take care of the intricacies of inter-services cooperation, to do so. It was

rather cumbersome for officers to go to Rawalpindi for every little thing. The distance also resulted in operations being planned with 'go alone' policy. The result was that there was a total lack of adequate mutual planning as experienced during the 1965 War. We fared better than the adversary not because we did very well but because the Indians did poorly on all fronts. The inter-services cooperation was a little improved in the 1971 War but there were glaring gaps in planning and execution of war in certain very important sectors. With the above aberration in the system, resulting from location of Air Headquarters, the results were obviously unsatisfactory. It was not entirely the fault of the sister services. The British C-in-Cs of the Army and the Air Force created the situation. The Army Chief wanted to treat the then RPAF as one of its arms whereas the Air Chief was adamant for a separate clear cut role for the RPAF. Some unpleasant notes were exchanged by them but the outcome was a 'Mexican Standoff.' Somehow this permeated to lower levels and over a period in some way germinated into a 'go alone' policy.

I discussed shifting of Air Headquarters to Islamabad with President General Zia-ul-Haq so that all decision makers and planners are located in the same area. He was very upbeat about this move. He told me to put a case for the move and he would approve it. The case was put up to Ministry of Defence to move Air Headquarters in stages, according to the availability of office accommodation to house essential Operations, Logistics and Maintenance staff. The new building built to move Headquarters of PAF Base Chaklala, was commandeered to temporarily house Air Headquarters' essential staff. Having obtained the permission of Government to move temporarily to Chaklala prior to shifting to E-9 Islamabad, the move of essential staff was undertaken on 6th March, 1983. The elements remaining at Peshawar were re-designated as Rear Air Headquarters. In my opinion this was an

historic day, not only for the PAF but for Pakistan as well, because all those required for planning for her defence were located in one area. On 30th December 1983 foundation stone was laid to start building infrastructure of Air Headquarters in Sector E-9 in Islamabad. It was designated as project 'Rawal.' The Government promised to allot extra budget during next three years for completion of the project but we accepted this undertaking with scepticism. However Ministry of Defence did allot extra budget for three years but thereafter the PAF had to build all the accommodation from within its budget with some additional help by the government. While planning the project 'Rawal,' I insisted that we must have a nine-hole golf course within the area. Although the planners showed reluctance to my suggestion, because of insufficient area available to them for planning a huge complex but they had to do it on my insistence. Today, the complex is all ready and it is aesthetically pleasing to the eye and environmentally, a very friendly place at Islamabad. The officers and their families play golf and many who do not play the game have a pleasant strolling area on the course available to them. The Officers' Mess has been built on a small hillock and its unique location is the best in Islamabad with all-round view of the Capital and the Margalla hills. Inter-services cooperation definitely increased manifold with availability of PAF planners in the Capital. It is highly satisfying that all planning is being done jointly as it should have been all along the years.

Efforts for Support to Surface Forces

The PAF acquired Exocet (AM-39) anti-ship missile made in France. It was inducted in the service on 22nd January 1982. In 1982 Falkland War the Exocet became famous worldwide when British Royal Navy's destroyer HMS Sheffield was sunk by

Argentine Navy's Super Etendard aircraft with Exocet on May 4th 1982. Also a merchant ship Atlantic Conveyor was hit and sunk on 12th may; and HMS Glamorgan was damaged on 25th May. During Iraq-Iran war an Iraqi pilot on May 17th 1987 in F-1 Mirage mistakenly attacked and damaged an American Frigate USS Stark with Exocet causing heavy damage. On the whole it was a good weapon for anti-shipping operations. To safeguard our ships sailing towards the Gulf we developed Pasni as a war time airfield. The addition of Pasni airfield and dedicated Mirage aircraft, fitted with Exocets, gave the PAF the weapon system required to support the Navy in anti-shipping operations deep into the Arabian Sea.

Early 1982 the Chinese government granted financial support for purchase of equipment for our armed forces. Whereas the Army and the PAF made plans for full utilization of grant but the Pak Navy did not want to utilize $100 million for purchasing submarines from China because, rightly so, they wanted to purchase more modern submarines fitted with new generation of equipment. Through interaction between the services we were in picture regarding dilemma of the Pak Navy. The PAF studied the requirement and felt that we could utilise the grant very effectively if the JCC decided to allot to us the Navy's share of funds. We decided to purchase Chinese A-5 aircraft to enhance our ground support capability and to provide us with very cheap flying hours to train our pilots. I may point out that a pilot needs a lot of flying hours to build up his experience. Since the cost of flying per hour on Mirages and F-16s is very high whereas cost on Chinese aircraft is very low, addition of A-5 would be cost effective for the PAF. It was intended to train pilots on this aircraft and then post them to Mirages and F-16s. The aircraft became a very useful addition in the inventory of the PAF and especially for dedicated Army

support. It became an excellent weapons platform with all the changes and additions of ancillary equipment acquired from western countries. The aircraft could take care of itself against a known threat from adversary's arsenal.

The PAF also commissioned Mirpur Khas and Vehari as forward air bases to support the land operations. In addition, Jacobabad and Nawab Shah Airfields were upgraded. The reorganization of PAF into Regional Commands, the induction of Exocet anti-ship missile, the addition of A-5 aircraft for ground support for the Army and development of forward airfields were all efforts to maximise inter-services cooperation.

Exercise 'Jetstream – 1982'

The aim of this exercise was to test the full range of Tactical Air Operations with a view to assessing its combat effectiveness in a realistic threat environment. It was conducted from 5th to 18th February, 1982. The significant facet of the exercise was a simulated war situation between two different forces, under their own independent commanders. The Army and the Navy also took limited part in the exercise to test and streamline inter-services cooperation. The exercise was monitored from the Command Operations Centre, though the conduct of exercise was handled by Air Officers Commanding, Regional Commands. The exercise was planned as realistically as possible. As it has been mentioned earlier, all shortages of manpower and equipment were taken care of by my illustrious predecessors. The vigorous operational preparedness programmes followed by the PAF from 1978, had brought the service to a state of readiness in which it could respond to any challenge. Having experienced two major wars the PAF was ever conscious of the numerical superiority of the adversary. The PAF also recognised the fact that the gaps in terms

of numbers had to be bridged through superior leadership, and training our pilots and ground crew to attain higher professional excellence. The squadrons were engaged in intensive flying training but they were made conscious of Flight Safety requirement of the PAF. When I visited the bases and through my directives, I stressed the need for Flight Safety to establish the relationship between operational preparedness and flight safety in the following words:

"Though the attainment of higher standards of operational readiness was the PAF's foremost objective, it was equally imperative in peace time that the price of achieving that aim was kept at a level not beyond the national means. Operational safety was not an end in itself but was an index of efficiency and a means of augmenting the PAF's combat potential. A systematic analysis of failure trends helped reveal potential risks and by taking timely corrective actions, flight safety directly contributed to operational efficiency."

F-16s on Pakistan Day Flypast

It is the tradition in the PAF that the Air Chiefs lead the annual flypast on Pakistan Day, the 23rd of March, in the latest aircraft in the air force. The practice was started of by Air Marshal Asghar Khan and this tradition has since been followed by all the successive Air Chiefs. I therefore decided to convert on the F-16, the latest aircraft in our inventory. After flying dual sorties with Wing Commander Shahid Javed, OC No 11 Squadron, I did my solo flight. The F-16 is a fighter pilot's dream of an aircraft. Its manoeuvrability, rate of climb, and acceleration is matchless. This is an aircraft in a way more powerful than the pilot. Whereas earlier aircraft could be over stressed by the pilots by pulling more than 7 Gs and therefore the

aircraft had to go through tests to declare them airworthy. F-16 on the contrary, cannot be over-stressed by the pilot as the flight control limiter takes over and prevents excess of G loads; rather a pilot can be overstressed! If a pilot has pulled 9 Gs he will notice that he has a tiny spots of blood on his chest and arms due to capillaries bursting under the load of 9 Gs. This is nothing to worry about as 9 Gs are seldom pulled; of course there is no danger to the pilots in any manner and they enjoy performing this exercise once in a while – I certainly did. On 23rd March 1983 I led the flypast in F-16 aircraft. This was the first time the public saw the new aircraft. The public was thrilled and they were even more thrilled by the show of solo aerobatics by Wing Commander Shahid Javed, the Squadron Commander. The public really took a fancy to this aircraft and its photos and paintings appeared all over the country. It certainly lifted the morale of the people, sky-high.

Exercise 'Jetstream-83'

The exercise was conducted from 3rd November to 3rd December 1983 for full one month; the aim was to test the endurance of the PAF. The newly inducted F-16s, A-5s (dedicated for close support) and Mirages equipped with Exocet for anti-shipping operation, took part in the exercise. While planning, special attention was paid to the Soviet-Afghan threat on our western border. PAF Kamra, though not yet commissioned as a full-fledged flying base was used as forward base to support operations on the West. The exercise was planned in full cooperation with Army and Navy. Lot of lessons learned during previous exercises, for inter-services cooperation and support, were confirmed and new lessons learnt.

Indo-Israel Collusion to Hit Kahuta

Indo-Israeli plan to attack Kahuta was published in 'Daily Times' Lahore on Monday, October 29, 2007. According to the news agency APP, 'The Asian Age' reported this in a report published on Sunday October 28, 2007. The report stated that a new book, "Deception: Pakistan, the United States and the Global Nuclear Conspiracy" by Adrian Levy and Catherine Scott-Clark, revealed details about India's secret intelligence links with Israel. It claimed that Indian military officials secretly travelled to Israel in February 1983 to buy electronic warfare equipment to neutralise Kahuta's air defences. According to the book, India put its plans on hold when the Chairman of the Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission warned the director of the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre that Islamabad would attack Mumbai if Kahuta was attacked. It states that at this juncture, Israel suggested that it would attack Kahuta from Indian bases, adding that former premier Indira Gandhi signed off on the Israeli-led operation in March 1984. However, India and Israel backed off after the US State Department warned India "the US will be responsive if India persists..." The story as published in the news paper was partly correct. The order for calling off the attack was not as written in the paper or what was published in the book.

Some time in 1984, I got a call at midnight from abroad that large a number of aircraft from Israel were heading towards the subcontinent. Since we knew the nefarious collusion of India and Israel to destroy Kahuta, I straightaway called Vice Chief of the Air Staff, Air Marshal Jamal to put the PAF on high alert. I informed the President of my action and also sought his clearance for our retaliatory plan to hit Trombay. The President authorised our plan. By, 2 AM, 80% of PAF personnel were on duty manning their positions and large numbers of aircraft were

airborne guarding the VPs. I also told the Air Defence Command to fly a few low and medium level sorties over Islamabad. During this time a call was made from Islamabad to abort the foolish venture because the PAF was on high alert and consequently the raiders returned back. Frankly, we did not understand why India accepted the Israeli plan because it was she who was going to be the major loser in this brinkmanship. This was especially so because I had publicly warned India of our unambiguous intentions to go for the quid pro quo. We were glad that someone with better perceptive advised all concerned to call off the ill-conceived venture.

Radar Rebuild Factory at Kamra

Modernisation of its air defence system required induction of a large number of modern and complex radar systems, automation equipment including computers, displays, power generators and specialist vehicles in the PAF. In order to maintain this sophisticated air defence in high state of serviceability and operational efficiency and to give Pakistan a degree of self reliance, there was a requirement to have in-country factory level maintenance support organization. In the absence of such an organisation a large number of components and assemblies had to be sent abroad for repair and overhaul involving huge recurring annual expenditure in foreign exchange. In addition, repair of items abroad would take a lot of time keeping affected radar systems out of action for much longer time. Such arrangement no doubt cannot ensure continued availability and operational preparedness of the air defence system. In November 1981, the PAF proposed to the government to establish a Radar Rebuild Factory at Kamra. The proposal also recommended including Pak Navy's and Army's

requirements as well. After conducting a comprehensive study by the Director General and his team, our proposal was accepted by the government to set up 'Radar Maintenance Centre (RMC)' at Kamra. I had the honour to perform the stone laying ceremony of this very important project on August 1983. The first MPDR-45E radar was inducted for overhaul in November 1983. Subsequently this set up at Kamra was taken over by Defence Production Division and renamed as Kamra Avionics and Radar Factory (KARF). Later there has been a further expansion made in the factory that has resulted in considerable savings of foreign exchange and most importantly, availability of radars and other ancillary equipment to the three services in much shorter time.

Institute of Air Safety

A very important step was taken on 2 March 1984 to establish the 'Institute of Air Safety.' The aim was to promote flight safety in the PAF by training selected personnel as flight safety experts, who would evolve, enforce and manage operational preparedness and safe flying that are complementary to each other. No air force is considered of high standard if it suffers more than normal accident rate required of a top class dynamic and aggressive air force. Although the PAF had an aggressive flight safety programme but we needed to train specialists in the domain of flight safety in the PAF. Therefore the Institute of Air Safety was established. It has had considerable achievement in all round training of PAF personnel; it is engaged in conducting courses for: Flight Safety Officers; Ground Safety Officers; Safety Programme Management; Aircraft Accident Investigation; Safety Programme Management; Technical Investigation; Quality

Assurance. The institute is also equipped with the unique facility of a 'Crash Laboratory,' which makes it the only one of its kind in the region. The institute is affiliated with the University of Karachi for the award of postgraduate diploma for graduating Air Safety officers. Within no time, the institution acquired a reputable status internationally in the domain of flight safety. The institution is proud to have trained a large number of Air Safety Specialists not only within the PAF, but also for sister services, civil organizations and from defence forces of friendly countries. As an adjunct to the Air Safety Programme, "Quality Assurance Programme" (QAP), was launched in 1984 at PAF Base Sargodha on F-16 aircraft at the organizational and intermediate (O&I) levels of maintenance. The programme was based on the United States Air Force concept of 'Combat Oriented Operation' (COMO) and was amended to suit the PAF's environments. The experts from General Dynamics at Sargodha imparted initial training to selected personnel who thereafter took over to conduct the training in the PAF. Since it was most beneficial programme, it was expanded to include the other weapon systems as well.

IBM-System-36

On 1st February 1984, the first terminal-oriented IBM System 36 computer was commissioned in the service. All the PAF Bases were provided with one Sys/36 each. It was a great leap in the PAF's history of computerisation as it provided: (a) Interactive Computing in PAF: A large number of online applications were developed by PAF programmers for various systems like Operations, Maintenance, Logistics, and Administration (b) Inter Connectivity: All the Sys/36s on PAF Bases were connected with each other through various PAF, SATCOM and civil

communication links. This enabled sharing / processing of data through distributed as well as centralised computing (c) Expertise in Computer Maintenance: PAF contracted with IBM and trained its personnel on hardware maintenance. Thereafter, complete hardware maintenance of Sys/36 was carried out by PAF indigenously. The IBM-System-36 inducted in PAF in 1984 and remained in service for about 20 years, during which it revolutionised the computing concepts in the PAF.

Air Base at Kamra

The invasion of Afghanistan posed a great threat on our western border. Since Peshawar was too close to border, we needed an airfield away from the border to have effective presence for patrolling duties. Since Kamra had a runway, we needed to add other facilities to make it an operational air base. It would not only look after the western border but also the Kashmir sector. Therefore development of the entire infrastructure required to base fighter squadrons was undertaken on priority bases. After completion of the necessary infrastructure, Kamra Flying Base was commissioned on 12th February 1984. Now there were two separate organizations at Kamra; Kamra Factory which is under the control of Ministry of Defence and PAF Base Kamra which is under the command of PAF. As soon as Kamra became functional as a flying base, a Mirage squadron was moved there in February 1984 and thereafter No 14 Squadron equipped with F-16s, replaced that squadron at the new base in September 1986. Heretofore F-16s were covering the western border from Sargodha with considerably reduced patrolling time, however operating from Kamra they were able to have more effective presence for longer time in the operational area.

Reorganisation of Electronics and Logistics Branches

It was felt that Electronics and Logistics had assumed great importance in the art of modern warfare. Consequently there was a need to separate these two sub-branches from the shadow of the Maintenance branch to let them grow to meet the challenges of the future. Therefore separate branches were commissioned in the PAF. This step put more vigour in these very important branches of the air force.

Boeing 707 for the PAF

With the advent of fuel efficient wide bodied aircraft and of anti-noise pollution measure in western countries, PIA had to retire Boeing 707 aircraft from its normal services, especially in Europe, even though being a robust aircraft it had good safety record and was a favourite of world's airlines. Consequently the PIA decided to sell this aircraft and therefore it put forward the proposal to the Cabinet for a decision. Since I was also a Director on the PIAC Board, I was invited to attend the meeting. During the meeting I proposed that PAF would like to purchase three aircraft to carry cargo to and from USA. I informed the members of the Cabinet that presently we carry our cargo to USA in C-130 aircraft which is time consuming, requiring three days to reach USA and three days for return journey. The Boeing aircraft will be much cheaper because one aircraft would carry load of 3 to 4 C-130s and besides the time spent will be cut by less than 50%. After some discussion the Cabinet accepted the request and the President approved the proposal for sale of three Boeings to the PAF.

Exercise 'Jetstream-84'

By mid-1984 we had two squadrons equipped with F-16s multi-role aircraft, two squadrons with A-5s, for ground support of

army were operational, Mirages had undergone up gradation of avionics, automated command and control system was fully functioning, all the problems highlighted during re-structuring of the PAF into Regional Commands were removed, all planned satellite airfields (except for Mirpur Khas and Vehari which would be available in early 1985) had the necessary infrastructure required for their war time role, and the pilots and ground crew were full of energy, having acquired very high skill level by taking part in realistic exercises. Since the President had told me that I would be retiring soon but the exact date he said he would tell me at a later date, I surmised that may be I would be retiring by the end of the year. So with that in mind I decided to launch Exercise Jetstream-84 as a grand finale to test the PAF in all its war time roles, in total realistic environments and with high intensity operations. The exercise was planned from 15th October to 3rd November for 19 days. The sister services took part in the exercise with skeleton forces. The exercise had total inter services orientation. It was a repeat of 1983 Exercise but with much higher intensity. The main thrust of the exercise was the two- front war scenario. The exercise was very successful and lessons learnt were discussed at inter-service and intra-service levels.

15
Welfare in the PAF

Along with preparing the PAF for the highest possible operational status, I under took many short term and long term measures for welfare of men and their families in the PAF including that of officers. This task was very close to my heart throughout my career, especially so, whenever I was appointed as a commander of a unit or a base. My motto was that you look after the men sincerely and they will give their best to the service. I am delighted to say that during my term of service as the Chief, the men gave their best. I am also proud to say that there was no strike or any kind of instability during any of my Commands in the PAF. In my opinion, such occurrences are result of failure, at some level, in the chain of command.

Immediate Programmes

When I was a Base Commander, I had observed that whenever married men were posted to another base, they would try to get their postings cancelled on one pretext or the other. I had asked my Base Warrant Officer the reason for their not moving on to new posting. He gave me two reasons: the first was that the airmen have 4 to 5 children each and when they are posted to

other bases the uniforms, books and syllabi are different and they cannot afford the money to spend on so many children; besides it disturbs the children mentally because of adjustment problems due to a changed set up. He further told me that many children lose a year of studies due to this reason. Another reason was also connected to this problem in that, on posting the airmen have to go on waiting list for the accommodation, consequently they had to send their families to their villages creating a bigger problem for the men and their families. I issued a directive to affiliate all PAF schools and colleges to Federal Board of Education; and uniform, books and syllabi to be standardized. Also all schools to be upgraded by one step i.e. middle school to be upgraded to high school, high school to intermediate level and intermediate to degree level. For the second problem I gave instructions to DCAS (Administration) to plan construction of accommodation to make up shortages at a fast pace so that every married airman should be able to get a house on the new base on posting. In about three years these problems was solved. Another major problem was that after retirement the finalization of pensions were taking too long, creating unnecessary hardships for retirees. I directed the Director of Accounts to send me list of retirees whose pensions were not issued after 90 days of their retirement. This problem was solved within two months. Since the accounts set up was under civilian control, where the actions were taken at a leisurely pace, I decided that PAF should takeover this organization. With lot of opposition to this move by the concerned government department, PAF took over Central Accounts Office on 1st July 1982 thus solving the problem hence forth. In addition, I moved the Record Office that deals with airmen's promotion, postings and retirements to Peshawar because 90 percent airmen belong to Northern Pakistan and all problems would be taken care off at Peshawar rather than all retirees moving to PAF Masroor Karachi to get their paper

work completed for pensions etc. These were the immediate steps that I took to make life easier for men and consequently, benefiting the service financially. My motto was that happier person always produces more and better work.

Shaheen Foundation

Like all other armed forces around the globe, officers and men of the Pakistan Air Force are beset by a major problem at the time of their retirement at a young age. The average age of a retiring officer is around forty-five, whereas the average age of an airman is around thirty-seven as compared to the sixty years for civilian government employees. While they are physically fit and groomed to undertake a wide range of jobs, the retired air force personnel lack the street smart ways of their civilian counterparts. Most of the retiring individuals have vast experience in human resource management along with specialist training in various fields, but do not have required degrees to support them in the civil market when applying for jobs. This situation called for measures to create job opportunities for these retiring personnel, and hence Shaheen Foundation was established in 1977 under the Charitable Endowment Act 1890. The main objective of the Foundation was to promote welfare activities for the benefit of serving, retired PAF personnel and their dependents for which finances were needed. As the government had no way or means to finance the activity of the Foundation except an interest free loan of Rs 20 million and one time grant of Rs 2.5 million, these I negotiated with the Government but the PAF had to take on the responsibility of meeting all the expenses of developing the Foundation into an effective organization. This was done by selling or auctioning scrap of destroyed equipment to junk dealers. Additionally,

financing was also arranged through sale of expended ammunition casing. This later method was a regular feature as the PAF continuously carries out armament practice exercises in its effort towards war preparedness. Thus, some finances were made available to start business projects but the difficult part lay ahead. Investments had to be chosen carefully so that their profitability was reasonably ensured.

Shaheen Airport Services

Soon after my assumption of command of the Pakistan Air Force, I was approached by Air Commodore Shujaatullah Khan (Rtd), with the idea of aircraft clearing service at Karachi International Airport. It could later be expanded to all the major airports of the country provided it proved profitable. I straight away liked the idea because it was right in the domain of the PAF. The project was discussed and approved in the meeting attended by the Directors of Shaheen Foundation; it was designated as 'Shaheen Airport Services.' The project took off as soon as it started and many foreign airlines switched over from PIA services to Shaheen Airport Services. The service was also started on other airports where foreign airlines made a stop. In fact it is the best organized service available in the country at airports and therefore very popular with the foreign airlines. The advantage of this project was that it is labour intensive and therefore large numbers of personnel of all ranks are absorbed in the set up. All credit to Air Commodore Shujaatullah for initiating a useful project. Luckily for us, he remained at the helm of affairs of the project for a long time and made lot of improvements and additions to the service. He also brought in all the customers. Shaheen Foundation will always remember, with gratitude, his contribution towards giving it flying start. It is

presently the main source of earning for the foundation. The service employs over 2,000 personnel and has the only organized training institute of its kind in the country. This institute is recognized internationally by IATA.

Karachi Multi-Storey Complex

In order to diversify the business activity of the foundation, Shaheen Foundation, identified various prime real estate sites at Karachi, Lahore, Rawalpindi and Peshawar which were available for building office complexes. Once completed, these complexes could then be another source of major earning for the Foundation. Under the guidance of Shaheen Builders, a multi-storey complex located at the intersection of MR Kyani and Dr Ziaudin Roads in Karachi was completed by Shaheen Builders on 5th July 1984. It is a 14-storey complex, with a revolving restaurant on the top floor, the first of its kind in Pakistan. Due to its strategic location from business point of view, it has attracted local as well as international clientele such as Chase Manhattan Bank, Bank of Tokyo, Bank of Hong Kong and Bank of Shanghai. The Complex is positively a significant addition to skyline of Karachi. This complex has given a big boost to availability of funds for welfare in the PAF.

Shaheen Builders

Shaheen Builders introduced the concept of 'bini-shell' for the first time in Pakistan in 1979. The concept, originally used in European countries for quick construction of shelters, could also be used for living and storage. In order to meet the air force's urgent requirement Shaheen Foundation constructed many such bini shells at Quetta and other far flung areas. The concept later proved very

beneficial for rice and wheat storage in Sindh and Punjab Provinces. It has built about 500 bini-shells of various sizes at a cost of Rs 600 million. It also built an eye-catching Cadets' Mess at the PAF Academy Risalpur, costing Rs 36 million.

Shaheen Knitwear

This manufacturing unit is located at Karachi; it is a complete entity comprising of knitting, dyeing, bleaching and stitching. Most modern machinery was imported from Germany and Italy. Hosiery products manufactured in this unit are of the highest quality and 50 percent are exported and the remaining are absorbed in local market. In this field growth potential is vast with substantial returns. This venture has provided jobs and imparted skill to a large number of wives and daughters of PAF personnel.

Overseas Employment Bureau

In order to provide jobs for the retired personnel with technical skills, SF established an Overseas Employment bureau at Karachi in collaboration with a Saudi firm based in Jeddah. It was established after fulfilling all the legal requirements of the land. It undertakes to gainfully employ abroad a large number of retired personnel who are specialists in the fields of aviation and electronics.

Solid State Electronic Industry

Solid State Electronic State Industry (SSEI) was set up at Karachi in 1981, at a cost of Rs 8 million for assembly. With the change of technology from tube to microchips, SF set up a microchip manufacturing plant to meet the demands of ever-growing local market. The unit has operated successfully so for.

Hawk Advertising Consultants

It started its operations from Lahore and later shifted to Karachi. It handles all advertising tasks of the PAF and a large clientele from commercial enterprises.

Educational Scholarships

After having established the various ventures which had started paying dividends, I directed that Shaheen Foundation to commence its welfare programme without any delay. The first item on our priority list was educational scholarships to the needy and talented students. Shaheen Foundation has four schemes catering for various categories of educational scholarships. The scheme caters mostly for children of PAF serving and retired personnel, deceased personnel and also for children studying at the FG Public Schools located within the PAF premises. To-date, nearly Rs 70 million has been distributed for this purpose and the budgeted allocation is making a steady increase each year.

Low Cost Housing

I also issued a directive to Deputy Chief of Air Staff (Administration) and MD Shaheen Foundation regarding provision of low cost housing to PAF families of officers who die in service and who have no where to go and are unable to support themselves. The directive was as follows:

"The PAF is sadly lacking in suitable facilities to look after the families of those PAF officers who expire while still in the service. In most such cases, the families receive some financial

assistance but are then left to fend for themselves. Thus left unsupported and usually friendless, they often find the hard and unprotected life in the civilian environment extremely difficult. A few instances have come to my notice where widows and, orphaned children of deceased PAF officers are faced with rather pathetic and tragic circumstances. Instead of giving such families only some paltry financial assistance and then disowning them altogether, we need to take concrete steps to alleviate their suffering and sorrows by helping them settle down until they are in a position to stand on their own feet. As a first step, therefore, you are to work out with the Shaheen Foundation a low cost housing scheme to accommodate such families within PAF residential areas. A small, functional and cost-effective house should be planned which is manageable within the limited finances of these families. The accommodation should consist of a bed-room and a half, a drawing-dining room, a kitchen, a store and a servant quarter. A number of such houses need to be built in Karachi, Lahore, Rawalpindi and Peshawar. The construction should be undertaken by the Shaheen Foundation and after completion; these houses could be handed over to the MES for normal maintenance. You are to put up the plans and estimates of costs to me at the earliest. I would also like to see that the children of deceased PAF officers are educated in our Model Schools and are encouraged to join the PAF. Those completing their education and desirous of serving in the PAF could also be nominated for entry into the PAF Academy and C.A.E."

I am glad this scheme was seriously undertaken by the Shaheen foundation and a large number of houses are being constructed and handed over to the needy families. And also special attention was being paid to the education of children of deceased officers.

Shaheen Foundation – Serving the Needy

Shaheen Foundation though a very new organization, has achieved a lot in the field of welfare which was the aim of its existence. I am sure in a few years it will mature into a sound philanthropic organization serving the needs of those who need the help the most. Shaheen Foundation has made a sound start. However it has a long way to go where it can provide help to all deserving and needy personnel or their dependents. I may point out that the first phase was essentially required to create avenues for building resources. With sound financial position the Trust will be able to venture into bigger projects to cater for every deserving case needing help. In future Shaheen Foundation will certainly herald happiness to many in the PAF. It will be unfair on my part not to eulogise untiring efforts of Group Captain (Rtd) Salahuddin, fondly called 'Sally,' for his untiring efforts to chalk out future plans for the Foundation. He remained its head for a long time and later the post of Managing Director was taken over by Air Vice Marshal Rana (Rtd) who was equally savvy in the business field. I am grateful to him for all the hard work he did for the Foundation.

Pakistan Air Force Women's Association

The PAF is a family and the service takes pride in sharing the joys and sorrows of life. We all realize that flying is a challenging profession and one can expect the unexpected at any moment. It is in such situations the family factor plays an important role. The women's organization is a legacy of the founding fathers. The British commanders, who were the pioneers, were family men and brought strong family values with them. As veterans of the Second World War, they had

experienced the pressures of combat. They precisely understood the importance of making the service a homogenous and integrated unit. It goes to the credit of the Pakistani Commanders Air Marshals M Asghar Khan and M Nur Khan, for laying a foundation to the role of officers' wives in giving a family orientation to the service. Subsequent commanders carried forward the good traditions.

My wife Tahira Shamim had already shared the responsibility of maintaining the family traditions during my tenures as Base Commander at Sakesar, Masroor and Korangi Creek. In addition, she was a part of Central PAFWA when I was a PSO (Assistant Chief of the Air Staff (Operations) at Air Headquarters. So she was ready for the job when the time came, not because it was a duty but because she had a strong desire to help the families of men to make them productive members of the society. This was to be achieved by giving the necessary training and providing a forum for bringing out their potential.

Of all the pleasant surprises, it was my wife's exuberance, about which I had no doubts, but the extent and amount of work she would do, certainly took me by surprise. Her accomplishments are simply phenomenal and as a husband I am indeed proud of her. What pains me is when I find some misunderstanding on the subject. This lack of appreciation which is restricted to very few is understandable; after all you cannot please everyone. What needs to be stated for the record is that the facts should speak for themselves. Fact No1: It is Tahira Shamim who revamped the entire PAFWA on modern managerial lines instead of being a low key organization. She took it up as solemn commitment. A charter of duties in the form of a Constitution was framed and the role, mission and strategic objectives were clearly defined. Both at the Air Headquarters as well as at the Bases, the undertaking was accorded the seriousness that the task demanded. The financial

and organizational matters were made transparent and accountability was established at all levels. Ad hoc working was replaced by streamlined measures – the aim being to have an efficient outfit capable of meeting the demands of modern philanthropic work. The entire programme was given a formality which it previously lacked. To put the change in perspective, PAFWA branches at all bases were integrated and liaison officers appointed. System of annual seminars was introduced to establish the working efficiency of the branches. Awards were instituted to inculcate a sense of competition and serve as a source of motivation. A particularly impressive medal was the PAFWA Golden Wing which was a feminine version of a flying wing. A lot of staff work went into the assignment but it was essential for the ambitious field projects that were envisaged. Fact No 2: It is Tahira Shamim who conceived the idea and made functional the Mujahida Academy Peshawar and the Mujahida Academy, Chaklala (Rawalpindi). These two academies were huge projects on a scale never before attempted for the ladies of the PAF. When established there were proposals that they be founded in the name of the person spearheading the project. My wife turned down the suggestions as she considered these as service institutions. The Mujahida Academy Peshawar was meant for professional courses like car driving, beauty parlour, painting, language learning, woodcraft, stitching, sewing, etc. Sports were encouraged and facilities created for squash, badminton, table tennis and swimming. The swimming pool became the centre of activities in Peshawar and many splendid galas were held. The significant feature is the date. It was 1980, now some three decades back. This was the time when Afghan jihad (liberation) against the erstwhile Soviet Union was at its peak. People were relatively conservative; what made the venture highly successful was the positive spirit behind the programme. Mrs Shamim worked

tirelessly, completely disregarding her health and comfort. She also explained the project to her colleagues lest there was any misunderstanding. The result was a resounding success. Ladies of all ages flocked to the academy which became a focal point of get-togethers and constructive learning experience. The Mujahida Academy at Chaklala (Rawalpindi) was an altogether different concept. It had a unique vision and objectives. Whereas the Peshawar institution catered to skills' development, the Rawalpindi venture would be a genuine step in education and learning. An old bungalow was selected as the site because of its ideal location and proximity to the entry point to the base. The renovation and expansion work was undertaken on war footing. There was so much to be done: dedicated Auditorium, Convocation Hall, Girls' Hostel, elaborate infrastructure of classrooms and associated items had to be completed. In view of the popular response, a covered swimming pool was to be constructed. Mrs Shamim worked on deadlines and all involved had to follow the hectic schedule. Begum Zia-ul-Haq, wife of the President of Pakistan, was to inaugurate the Academy. The aim was to launch the project with two courses B Ed (Bachelor of Education) and Montessori. Officials of the University of Punjab were invited as affiliation would be required. Library facilities were added overnight on a temporary basis. Since its establishment, thousands of students have graduated from both Mujahida Academies Peshawar and Chaklala. There will hardly be any school in Rawalpindi/Islamabad where you would not find a graduate of the Mujahida Academy Chaklala on the teaching faculty. Daughters and wives of PAF airmen, officers, civilians, and the army fraternity, everybody has benefited from the facility. The influence is not restricted to merely the home city; it goes much beyond as far as Azad Kashmir, Jehlum and Attock. The modest beginning has matured into a fine institute, rightly

affiliated today with the Air University but having the potential to take the shape of an independent university in the future. A glance at its 2008 brochure shows the wide variety of courses. One feels tremendous satisfaction because when these facilities were being set-up, there was a lot of criticism and scepticism. It was said that these would be short lived projects. By the Grace of Allah, they have stood the test of time and proved the critics wrong. In my opinion, the Mujahida Academies were wonderful additions and made PAFWA a meaningful welfare organization.

Besides the academies, PAFWA became the nucleus and hub of family life within the service. Activities were generated at all levels – officers, airmen and PAF civilians. It was not entirely fun and entertainment. A salient feature was the emphasis on literary discourse and penmanship. Under the caption of Mujahida, annual numbers of the bilingual magazine (Urdu and English) were published. Awards for best writers in the genre of poetry, short story and essay were initiated. A lot of talent was discovered which would have remained untapped were it not for Mrs Shamim's endeavours. In the process my wife discovered her own self. I had known that she always had a liking for poetry but that she could produce national level poetry was beyond my expectations. A formal launching ceremony of her compositions was solemnised in 1983. The then Minister for Defence, Mir Ali Ahmed Khan Talpur, was the Chief Guest. He delivered a hilarious speech which was followed by an equally witty talk by the late scholar Wing Commander Muzaffar Ali Syed. The poems of Mrs Shamim were sung by the well known artist Munni Begum and proved to be an instant hit. These appeared on television and were broadcast by the national radio. My wife composed taranas (anthems) for the air force. To this day they are played as marching tunes. It is also edifying to hear her ghazals played by the FM radio stations. While I was in service

it could be said that may be the Air Chief was being obliged; not any more. The fact is it is her talent that speaks for itself. I may hasten to add, as much as talent, it was hard work.

Coming back to the point of criticism, it is indeed sad that something which was so useful could turn into a controversy. In my years of retirement, I have thought over the issue. Two points need clarification. First is the loose talk that an overwhelming number of PAF officers were involved in PAFWA. This is patently wrong. In my extended tenure as Chief, PAFWA went through three phases: in the first phase, the Secretary Air Board (Air Commodore Yamin) performed the role of Liaison Officer. Air Commodore Muhammad Yamin was a respected officer, widely acclaimed for his competence. Much of the work he did himself. It is unimaginable that he could involve other officers. He didn't have to, he was good enough himself. On his retirement the new Secretary Air Board carried on for a short time. Later a young upcoming Education Branch Officer Flight Lieutenant M Tariq Qureshi was selected for the task. Extremely hardworking, he was a typical lone ranger type. Even when told to involve others he wouldn't. It was against his ethics of honour and work to pass on the buck to someone else. He rose in the service and headed the Education Branch; besides the fact that he was a highly successful Principal of PAF Public School Lower Topa. He was followed by Flight Lieutenant Rao M Ayub Khan, also from the Education Branch. The officer had profound stamina for work and could spend long hours in meeting the deadlines. On retirement from the air force, he has flourished in the real estate business of Karachi. Obviously he had huge talent and ability. Yamin was an elder statesman of PAF; the other two young officers worked under the guidance of my wife. They comprised her secretariat at different times. If this was not frugality in staffing, then what else is? The second point of

criticism was that hard methods and arm twisting tactics were used to compel people for participating in PAFWA activities. For getting things done, at some level there might have been over enthusiasm. Such an attitude never had my blessing. My wife did not deal directly and acted through the liaison officers. The question is who was arm twisting whom? The actual thing was it was a novelty in the early eighties to see a lady leading the show. That generated envy therefore the lose talk. I am glad Mrs Shamim remained steadfast and resolute against what would be described today as male chauvinism. She did what she considered right and made concrete progress, especially in the domain of education. This is an area where much more can be added to the existing infra structure. While much headway was made at the central level both when Air Headquarters was in Peshawar and when it shifted to Chaklala, there was a sea change in the performance of PAFWA centres at the bases. The concept was concretized at each base and depending on the resources and population, the structure was established. The result has been that the bigger bases have relatively stronger setups. However there was a minimum requirement which was a must for all bases. The benefits were, therefore, equally distributed. Today when you visit any base, you can find a vibrant PAFWA centre. Invariably it includes a Montessori for the children of PAF personnel as well as the civilians. Then are classes for sewing, stitching, embroidery, beauty and make-up and activities related to women. The highpoint used to be the annual PAFWA funfair organized at bases. Income generated from these fairs was utilised for welfare purposes. At the central PAFWA (Air Headquarters) level, a mega funfair called Jashan-e-PAFWA was an annual feature. As the organisation gained experience, the event grew in stature and earnings. Substantial savings were made which allowed grants for the needy and poor. Scholarships

for deserving students were introduced and wholesome packages were formulated. Also a part of PAFWA contribution was the winter relief and warm clothing for people of the northern areas of Pakistan which was legacy from the previous heads of PAFWA. When so much of activity is generated, there will naturally be some minor irritants. As commanders it is imperative to take the initiative and not to get bogged down with fears of the unknown.

In retrospect I must praise Mrs Shamim for her brave and daring steps. In a man's world, she adopted the path where angels fear to tread. Through her untiring and uncompromising efforts she brought smiles on the faces of large number of families and especially for those who needed immediate help. We all have to one day enter the twilight zone of our life. There is much comfort in time well spent, when God gave the opportunity to do something for others.

16
Family Affairs

When I was posted to PAF Base Sakesar in 1970, I sent a letter to Chairman CDA Islamabad for allotment of a residential plot in the capital. He sent me a standard reply, "Your name has been put on the waiting list. You will be informed in due course." Thereafter, I would send a reminder to CDA every year and receive the standard answer. When I assumed the command of Pakistan Air Force, I sent the reminders along with all the correspondence to then Chairman CDA, Mr Gardezi. After a few days when I also talked to him about the correspondence since 1970, he burst into a hearty laugh. He was kind enough to call me back and to tell that he was sending details of two plots so that I could choose one of the two. We chose the one in F-6/3. During this time I was also allotted a plot in E-7, along with other senior officers of armed forces by the government. Air Commodore Sajad Haider, a friend and roommate of yesteryears, approached me to give him the E-7 plot. I gladly gave him that plot because I already had one allotted to me by the CDA through the normal system. I could have kept it for myself but I was not greedy to do so. Since the family decided to permanently settle in Islamabad, we planned to sell the house in Karachi that was constructed in 1973. Since our house was part of the area

that became commercial, the value of the house increased much beyond our expectations, putting us in a sound financial position. With part of the earnings from the sale of the Karachi house, we built our present house and utilised the remaining amount for meeting the requirements of our grown up children.

We had been blessed with two daughters, Farah and Saqeba, and a son Asad. Farah did her Masters in English Literature from the University of Punjab and Saqeba did her graduation from the University of Peshawar. Both sisters were married to two brothers, Ghalib Iqbal and Nadeem Iqbal in 1984. These were arranged marriages brought about by a mutual friend. The ceremonies were simple, and the guests were family friends and colleagues. Our son Asad was married in Islamabad. His marriage was also solemnised in early 1985 in similar traditional manner as that of our daughters. Ghalib is an ex-Naval officer who had opted for Foreign Service in deference to the wishes of his parents. Our contact with the family was established while he was undergoing training in the Joint Services Academy. A year after the marriage, the couple, with Shan Ali their son, moved to Canada on posting. Later they were blessed with a daughter Dannia. Farah is a published artist but paints as a hobby. Nadeem is a doctor and he and Saqeba moved to Richmond Virginia in America. Presently they are in Minnesota where Nadeem is a partner in a neurological firm. While they were at Richmond, Saqeba did her second graduation from Marymount University in Virginia. Fourteen years after their marriages both sisters resumed their education and opted for coveted profession of Law. Farah did her Law from London and is an advocate practicing in Pakistan, whenever Ghalib is posted back home. Saqeba did her Law course from William Mitchell College of Law, in Saint Paul Minnesota graduating with JD Degree (Juris Doctor) and is a practicing Attorney at Law in the State of Minnesota. They are blessed with

two sons Shaz and Haaris. Saqeba is also a published artist in abstract art but paints as a hobby.

Asad and his bride went to Virginia USA, for studies. The money left over after the construction of the house and marriages was set aside for his studies. He earned his Bachelor of Science in Electronics and Computer Engineering from George Mason University. After gaining practical experience in various firms, while he was serving in MCI from 9 AM to 5 PM he joined evening classes for three days a week from 6 PM to 10 PM in George Washington University in Master of Science in "Information Systems Course." Because of his experience he was also employed as a lecturer for three days in a week to teach MS classes in one of his specialities. Despite full time engagement for 5 days at MCI and 6 days teaching and studying at GWU even then he graduated with 3.93 GPA out of 4.0. The University offered him a full time teaching job but he declined in favour of working in Corporate America. Wherever Asad has worked, he has won awards. The major ones are MCI Spotlight Ovation 2nd quarter, Ovation Leader Award 3rd Quarter, Spotlight Ovation 4th Quarter 1996 and a Circle of Excellence February 1997. While at Pepsi Cola he received PepsiCo Network MPLS Conversion award 2004, PepsiCo International Outsourcing NextGen Award 2006. He studies regularly and has earned many certificates during his career. The top ones are MCSD.NET Certified, Nov 2003 and ITIL Certification, April 2006; only eight IT Engineers in the world have qualified for this award. He does not believe 'in all work and no play'. He loves parachute jumping. He did his first jump in Pakistan along with me when he was only 14 years old. He plays golf and squash regularly and his hobby is playing and composing music. He also sings, has composed and marketed four albums in early nineties. He was one of the early rock stars in Pakistan. Asad has always

proved more than equal to the task. I have always been proud of my son's achievements in every field of endeavour in spite of vicissitudes of life. Till recently, he was the Chief Technology Officer for North American Pepsi Cola International. After completing his contract he has decided to accept prestigious assignment as the Chief Architect of British Telecommunication in February 2009. Asad is blessed with son Ryan and daughter Ariana.

17
Retirement from the PAF

Before I write about my retirement from the PAF, I would like to answer an oft-repeated question – why was my tour of duty extended in the PAF to almost six and a half years? A few days prior to completion of my three years term in July 1981, the President came to visit Air Headquarters Peshawar along with Air Commodore M Salim, the Air Secretary, who happened to be his brother-in-law. Over a cup of tea, he told me that he was extending my tenure by one year. I requested him to give me another assignment but he replied that he wished to extend the tenure of the Chiefs from 3 to 4 years, as it was, prior to when Mr Bhutto changed it to three years. He said that my predecessor stayed as head of the Air Force for more than 4 years. Thereafter, he kept on extending my tenure one year at a time perhaps due to negotiations with procurement and induction of F-16s. I have written earlier that the President had told me in August 1984 that I would be retiring soon. I gathered had that perhaps in next couple of months he would inform me, but he procrastinated on the issue for several more months for reasons beyond my knowledge. The answers I can put forth were perhaps he could have been preoccupied with other pressing issues of state or he was trying to choose the officer out of a few candidates and was unable to make

up his mind. Only he would have been able to throw light on the actual reason, had he been alive.

Finally, the President visited Air Headquarters on 22nd February 1985 to give me the happy news that he had decided to retire me with effect from 5th March 1985 and that I was to hand over to Air Marshal Jamal A Khan. He asked me if I had any preference for a job. To that I replied none. He then suggested to me to take over as Managing Director Pakistan International Airlines. I said I would like to take over PIA provided I am also given the portfolio of the Chairman as well. To that he said he would like to keep that with the Secretary General Defence. I therefore politely declined the offer. Then he offered me the ambassadorial appointment to Canada and I accepted with thanks. The agreement was received from Canada in due course but I was unable to proceed there due to domestic problems. I told the President of my inability to proceed on diplomatic assignment because of family reasons. Nevertheless, the President was kind enough to keep the post vacant for one year till I finally told him about my inability to proceed abroad on posting and the issue was closed. The news media had a field day inventing and spreading baseless stories, those I shall write in the next chapter.

The period of transition between uniform and civvies was spent flying to bases to say final goodbye and thank them and their families for all their cooperation extended to us. The evenings were devoted to farewells from colleagues of other services.

4th March 1985 was my last working day in the PAF. The evening was devoted to attending farewell dinner arranged for us by Air Marshal Jamal A Khan the designate Chief of the Air Staff of this glorious Air Force. The farewell was attended by all Base Commanders, Staff Offices and their Begums. The farewell speech of Jamal, who was my squadron buddy, a roommate, a

friend, a colleague and at the end, my trusted Vice Chief of the Air Staff, showed his meticulous staff work in digging out all my achievements of past six and a half years. I am very grateful to him for that meaningful and pleasant speech during the farewell party. His speech in fact is the apt conclusion of my services to the nation. Many thanks Jamal. I have therefore attached it as Appendix "B" to the autobiography and also my goodbye speech as Appendix "C." On 5th March 1985 I handed over the command of the finest air forces – which indeed is second to none – during a small but impressive ceremony at PAF Chaklala. I issued my last 'Order of the Day' to Air Headquarters, Command Headquarters and Bases; this is attached as Appendix "D." Thereafter, I drove home as a retired Air Chief. On reaching home, I offered my prayers to thank Almighty God for the honour he had bestowed on me to be the head of this fine force, and for His guidance in preparing it to be a strong air force, second to none, and to act as a deterrent to any aggressor against our Fatherland.

18
Burden of Command

"It takes your enemy and your friend, working together to hurt you to the heart; the one to slander you and the other to get news to you," said Mark Twain. The command of a fighting force is a sacred responsibility given by the nation but predestined by Almighty God. Therefore it is not a burden in that sense; in fact it is an enjoyable duty and responsibility and one prays to Almighty for help to grant energy, drive, vision, imagination, integrity and ability to make sound decisions in the line of duty to the nation. At times the leader and his team (Air Board) have to make some unpopular decisions such as not promoting those found unfit for further promotions, retiring those who have completed their service or age limits, and a few who are not considered for appointments they thought they deserved. Since the slots at the top are few and the contenders are many, therefore, some officers have to be retired and some are superseded which is the normal process in the armed forces. No doubt, amongst them will be a few whose ambition far exceeds their intelligence. Consequently some of those become disgruntled and indulge in distasteful talk against the leader and the air force. This phenomenon is universal and therefore needs to be accepted. In the chapter above I have already talked of

allegations and rumours but I would like to repeat some of those and also answer others generated by media and our so called intellectual writers.

"He is Qadiani"

I am not a Qadiani. I am son of late Mr Muhammad Rafiq well-known educationist, resident of Haripur Hazara. My father was well-known in Hazara. This rumour was spread to limit my advancement in service by officers, who in their opinion surmised that they may not be able get ahead in the service by their own ability. They started underhand methods to pull down those whom they considered likely threats to their advancement in service.

Son-in-Law posted in Foreign Service?

My son-in-law Ghalib Iqbal was already an officer in Foreign Service when he got married to my daughter. The allegation that I in any way arranged for his selection in Foreign Service when he was an officer in the Pak Navy, is a blatant lie. It was started by Foreign Service Officers because of jealousy. Such an allegation originating from highly educated and no doubt, cream of young men of our country is rather disconcerting.

My Ambassadorial Appointment Refused?

A rumour was spread that my ambassadorial appointment had been refused by Canada on grounds of corruption and narcotics smuggling. As a matter of fact, I was accepted for Ambassadorial appointment by Canada and the agreement was received by Foreign Office but I could not proceed due to domestic preoccupations. The Government kept that slot vacant for me for one year in case I was

able to proceed to Canada at a later date. Since my problems were still unsolved, I requested the President to withdraw my name. To add spice and credibility to the above, another rumour was aired by the same people that I was refused Ambassadorial appointment to Saudi Arabia also on similar grounds. I never asked to be sent to Saudi Arabia as Ambassador nor the government ever made any such suggestion. It was a figment of imagination of some unscrupulous reporter based in London who got it published in a foreign magazine to malign me because I was the Air Chief during Martial Law Government. I may bring out a point for information of readers that the Governments of Pakistan as well as America have a complete list of people involved in such heinous crimes. This is also a method of ruining some one's reputation by sadists and deranged persons who have no fear of God's wrath on the issue of spreading knowingly false allegations. The drug references seem to have started in "Newsweek" in mid-eighties and a majority of research employees of well-known research centres jumped on the wagon to have an extra pound of flesh to malign the Martial Law government – something not uncommon amongst the individuals on pay rolls of vested parties. It did not help to be working during Martial Law years - guilt by association is often the case. As far as dealing in drugs is concerned it is based on mala fide intention by someone on behest of sponsors. The list of all those involved in this activity are known to Narcotics Control Departments of America as well as in Pakistan. No God fearing person indulges in such an activity. If I was involved in such criminal activities, the US Government would never have honoured me with "Legion of Merit."

Grant of Extensions as Air Chief

To grant extensions is the prerogative of the Government. I never wanted nor asked for extensions. The President wanted to

keep me on the job till the new CAS would be about fifty-two years of age. It is quite possible the officer he had considered was relatively junior and in addition, he also wanted me to ensure that F-16s were inducted in one year, an undertaking I made in a meeting with the US delegation prior to my retirement. When the induction was completed and my successor had crossed the target age, I was retired.

Allegations of Kickbacks in Purchase of F-16s

F-16s were purchased through Foreign Military Sales (FMS) on my suggestion. What is FMS and how it functions has been written in detail earlier in this book. I would like to refresh the reader's memory. Such deals are done between governments and therefore no agents are allowed. This is guaranteed by the US government. In fact Secretary of State is required to report to Congress of any wrong doing. If the buyer suspects any hanky-panky, they can request the US Government to carry out an investigation. If any foul play is established, the CEO and the directors of the company are liable for prosecution. The rules for FMS are available from the Department of Defence Purchase. I am proud to have saved millions of dollars to my country by dealing via FMS. When I went to visit the General Dynamics Company (then manufacturers of F-16), during dinner the President of the company congratulated me and said that it was the cleanest deal they ever signed with any country outside the USA. That was the finest moment of my career. The dinner was attended by late Lt Gen Ejaz Azim the Ambassador of Pakistan in Washington. Since international as well as local agents and connected people were deprived of a very large amount of money as fees, therefore they all ganged up to defame me. Behind circulation of this rumour was also an unscrupulous lady

journalist based in London. To give credence to their allegation of money-making in the F-16 deal, it was alleged that I had bought a ranch in America. A ranch is not a needle that one can hide in America. The ownership of land is public knowledge and every one has access to it. Ipso facto, if some one insists that I have a ranch, to defame me; in that case God will take care of him for spreading baseless rumours.

'High Life' in America

Although I would have never liked to write about the reason I had to live in America about eight months in a year, but I am forced to. Soon after retirement, my two brothers-in-law died leaving behind two widows and five children ages 2 to 12. Since we were free, we decided to stay with them to provide guidance to the children and look after their business. They did not need any financial support from us. We accepted this as a duty to the family. Of the five children, three were admitted in medical colleges, two of them became doctors, and one pulled out in the final year because of illness and one recently graduated and is doing a job. One unfortunately died. Later, the business was sold and the money invested in a gas station. They now have a regular income and their younger brother is looking after the business. We needed to visit them once or twice a year. Some writers wrote that I was enjoying life in America. This may be true for workers or for those who are unable to find high salary jobs in Pakistan. In Pakistan I have a nice house, three servants provided by the government, I am on the protocol list and enjoy a lot of other privileges; and best of all, I am a first class citizen in my country rather than a 'mister no body' in another country.

I have one house that I am living in since my retirement and have a 1980 model car. The house was constructed with the

money I made when I sold my house in Karachi. Luckily the area, where my house was situated was made commercial and I sold my house in 1983 at considerable price. With that money I built my present house in Islamabad, on the land allotted to me by CDA. (I have already written regarding allotment of this land earlier in the book). The remaining money was spent on marriages of my three children in 1984 and 1985. The left over money was given to my son to complete his education. I only supported him for two years. While working he did his undergraduate studies from George Mason University.

There was an interesting write up in the newspaper that my son was living in Shish-Mahal (Glass House) opposite White House. The fact was that he lived, for a while, in an apartment in Crystal City (translated as Sish-Mahal by an imaginative reporter) in Virginia which is situated opposite to the White House but the other side of the Potomac River. I must however give full marks to the scheming minds of Pakistani reporters and the publishers. I do not think such people have any sense of right or wrong as long as they can make money regardless of damage they may cause to others in the process of enhancing their sales of newspapers.

Bizarre Rumours

There was news published in a paper from Peshawar that my wife and Begum Zia-ul-Haq went to Dubai 28 times on smuggling trips. The fact is my wife never travelled in the same aircraft with the Begum Sahiba at any time while we were in service or afterwards. Manufacturing such baseless stories is nothing but a criminal act. I think we need "Justices" who would give justice to victims as it is the practice in western countries. The sad part of the whole affair is when writers, who consider

themselves intellectuals, write with authority, by quoting other writers who had earlier written such nonsense or gathered defaming material from disgruntled elements and without bothering to investigate its details, have written as if they have God given high moral authority to do so. How would one class such writers? The answer is quite simple – they certainly have exposed themselves as cheap thrill makers. Some writers have found a short route to fame or scholarship and fellowship for universities in western countries by writing saucy stories about religion, human rights, armed forces and the officers. They get immediate acceptance in foreign capitals, foreign media and universities. I say: "Please do write, because it is your right to do so, but make sure that you possess full knowledge as to the authenticity of what you are writing otherwise you are hurting not only the individual but also their families. As far as your country is concerned, you are making her a laughing stock in the comity of nations."

While I am on this subject of allegations, I have a request to make to my honourable legislators to pass laws that penalize monetarily those who write against people and are unable to substantiate their insinuations in the Court of Law. Mere apology is meaningless for the affected who have lost their reputation as well as a lot of money on lawyers to fight to extract a simple apology. They are not interested in one-line, small-print apologies appearing in newspapers after many days.

In my life so far, I went after late Mr Munir Hussain an eminent writer. I hired a lawyer who wrote a letter to him and the newspaper. He promptly apologized in writing and also got it published in the same newspaper. He expressed his astonishment to a mutual friend as to why I picked on him and not so many others who have been writing against me. I sent him a reply that in my opinion he was an intellectual and therefore should have

known better; while the others who write do not belong to that class even though they may be excellent writers in Urdu or English. Besides I do not have that kind of money to go after every Tom, Dick and Harry.

"He is Against Christians"

About three years back we went to Canada to see our daughter. There at a party, a retired officer who happened to belong to Christian faith came to meet me. He bluntly told me that I was against Christian officers because I retired Group Captain Cecil Choudhry from service who was a Pakistani hero of wars with India. He asked me if I had read his interview in Defence Journal issued from Lahore. Before I could reply, I was rescued by the host. When I returned to Pakistan I located the magazine in the library and read about 18 pages of mudslinging mostly against me and some against Air Chief Marshal Jamal.

Before I write about Cecil Choudhary's retirement from service, I shall copy below what is written in the book, "Profiles of Intelligence" - "Air Attaché to UK" by Brigadier Syed Ali Tirmizi published in July 1995, reprinted in October 1995 and July 1997 (on pages 195 and 196 written):

"Group Captain Cecil Choudhry, one of the ace pilots and a decorated flyer of Pakistan Air Force was selected to represent Pakistan as Air Attaché, Embassy of Pakistan, London, UK. Before taking up his assignment, Cecil came to the ISI for briefing and had to stay for a couple of days in Islamabad. The same evening he was seen at the residence of Soviet Air Attaché in Islamabad, dining and drinking with him. We were taken aback. For how long had they known each other? How did the Soviets come to know that Cecil was going as Air Attaché? On

the face of it, the contact seemed much older. A report was made to DGI. Our apprehensions were that, obviously, an attempt was being made by the Soviets to cultivate Cecil for possible assignment in London against the Western countries or the US. If the Soviets succeeded in their designs, many problems would be created for Pakistan at the international level. We sent a report to the Air Chief and to the President recommending that Group Captain Cecil should not be sent to UK. The PAF authorities would not take it lying down. There was a lot of resentment and protest raised. The Air Chief personally took up the matter with the President. The ISI and its operators came in for a full-blooded assault. The Air Headquarters even did not permit us to speak to Cecil which we very much wanted to do and which was a genuine security requirement. We needed to know full details about his contacts with the Soviets. His information would have helped us to know more about the Soviet methods and targets. However, the PAF authorities refused to cooperate and denied us vital information. The ISI are as proud of Cecil as the PAF. He has always been respected as a pilot and as a gentleman. He is also a personal friend. He must have got upset for not going to London on the coveted assignment. We only hope he did appreciate and understand that interests of Pakistan are and will always remain supreme. However to compensate Cecil, the PAF authorities sent him to Iraq as Air Attaché. Complacency can be suicidal. The Soviets in Iraq were as free to contact Cecil as they were in London. A better briefed and better security trained Cecil could be an asset. We only wish there was better understanding and coordination between the two agencies. It was due to our revised policy, improved technique and the vigilance of the CI team of ISI that a possible damage was averted. May Allah in His infinite mercy look after those who can not look after themselves."

Note: Cecil Choudhry was not sent to Iraq as Air Attaché as mentioned above in the book but was sent as pilot instructor to Iraqi Air Force along with other pilots.

I have personally liked Cecil who, I found, was ever-exuberant and ever-ready to fly. He was one of the pilots who were with me during attack on Amritsar Radar. There is no doubt he is our hero. Precisely for that reason we in the PAF High Command decided not to hand him over to ISI for extended questioning and let him proceed on normal retirement. I discussed this with the President who agreed with my suggestion. I also took permission from the President to send him to Iraq as a pilot instructor along with other pilots, so that he can get extra financial help prior to retirement; and on his return he will be honourably retired. Thereafter, on his return from Iraq, he was retired from PAF but given a job in Shaheen Foundation in Lahore till he was absorbed in a civilian job. I recall my years as a cadet and instructor pilot when every time when a cadet was suspended from flying he would blame his instructor for being unfair with him. This was the case with our hero who had to invent an enemy for his retirement from service, hence that interview in the 'Defence Journal.' I am however surprised at the highly respected editor of the reputable magazine, who has deep links with armed forces, to pit a Group Captain against an Air Chief; and for not investigating the bona fides of the interview from me or the Air Force, prior to printing. I am equally surprised why the PAF did not react and rebut the narrative to defame me after it was printed? I shall leave it to the imagination of the readers! I may bring out a point, not related to the above, that wars produce highly capable pilots who become aces during war. However, after the war many are demobilized as they were found unsuitable as officers in peace time. Sometimes a few are unable to adjust in the service due to the glamour and fame as a result of prowess displayed during war.

Dangerous Move

Finally, I would to write about a very dangerous move by an organization smacking of cloak-and-dagger method to achieve whatever was the intending aim. While I was abroad one of my servants, a government employee, who lived in a nearby village, was picked up by three occupants of a long black car, as soon as he reached the bus stand. On the way to Islamabad, the leader gave him a proposition that he was to work for them. He told him that some task will be assigned to him to be carried out in the retired Chief's house. For that task he will be paid Rupees one lac and a Suzuki car and generally would be looked after. Before dropping him at Abpara, he was warned not to talk to any one about the deal otherwise he will be killed; also his family will be harassed. The servant was a God-fearing person who was thoroughly shaken. He narrated the whole story to my driver, a Chief Technician in the PAF. He was also thoroughly shaken and promptly rang me up in USA. I straightaway rang up my former Personal Staff Officer (PSO) who at that time was posted in ISI as Second-in-Command. I told him the whole story and also told him to inform the DG ISI. In the meantime I also gave a call to the Air Chief to inform him about the episode. As far as I was concerned the DG ISI looked after the case. However the matter was closed for me but not for my servant. Although he had been working for me for many years, he requested me to send him back in the PAF. He was so scared that he developed heart problem and died very young. May God give him a place in Heaven. Amen!

Epilogue

The year is 2009 and I have completed the story of my long association with the PAF and the years spent in retirement. It has all been a very fruitful experience. There are no regrets and whenever I turn back the pages of my life, I am overwhelmed with humility and Allah's kindness to me and my family. There is neither any bitterness nor anger for those who tried to cause me discomfort or defame my reputation. By the Grace of Allah my credentials rest on firm foundations. I did not inherit glory and I did not receive any munificence from those in authority. I earned every single achievement through hard work and faith in the Maker. After putting in my best, it is my belief to leave the rest to destiny. What had to come did come my way.

A question I ask myself and the reader may still like to ask, why was there some controversy in the media about me whereas the same did not happen to most other retired Air Chiefs. I have often wondered; it should not have been like that. I am not clueless and I can fathom the factors. The first reason would sound very odd to a reader today but perhaps it was relevant in the Pakistan of 1980's. The spouse of the Air Chief has a role to play. As shown in the narrative, she accomplished her part most admirably. However she was ahead of the times and some of the measures were truly innovative. This innovation was beyond the

understanding of some individuals. For instance Mrs Shamim arranged the construction of first swimming pool (covered and having total 'purdah') for ladies in Peshawar. It was a progressive, forward looking step. The swimming pool in Peshawar was followed by another at the Mujahida Academy of PAF Base Chaklala. These were exclusive facilities for ladies. Although thirty years have passed, not a single addition has been made to these. The pro-active attitude of Mrs Shamim resulted in criticism of the Pakistan Air Force Women's Association. As my wife had the honour to be the President of the association, I also came in for criticism once we retired. In her defence, I shall maintain that my wife worked very hard. She established institutions and laid solid foundations for welfare. Whereas others talk, she actually did convert dreams into reality. By nature my wife and I are programmed to be helpful. We actually get satisfaction from serving and helping people.

A second reason for the pathetic witch hunt was perhaps my association with the regime of General-Zia-ul-Haq. I have described in my account that in the first brief that I got from the then President, I was told that I had nothing to do with Martial Law. Thus it was a mere coincidence that I was the Chief in that particular phase of our history. I have professional respect for General Zia; he was a true patriot but a dictator. Politics neither was nor will ever be my business. Hence it was naïve on the part of some misguided critics to hold me accountable for the Zia era.

I have already highlighted the extended tenure of service that I was blessed with. This was unusual because it had not happened to other Chiefs except Air Marshal M Asghar Khan. In the long tenure that I had, there was a lot of progress and development in the PAF. From a small tactical air force, we became a potent service capable of facing the traditional rival in the east. This kind of achievement was a little difficult for some

frustrated individuals to digest. So the oldest human weakness of jealousy or envy came into play. Any shortcoming or lapse (real or imaginary) was blown out of proportion and a mountain was made out of a mole hill. These have all perished with the passage of time because falsehood has no legs to stand on.

Among the many achievements that we had, I would single out the successful induction of the F-16 Fighting Falcon aircraft. It is indeed a unique weapon system. More than two decades have passed and it still serves as the bulwark of national defence. Every time it is airborne, it quickens the heartbeat. It was never easy to get this aircraft. The perseverance displayed by my team prevailed over the resistance that we experienced. The aircraft is going to see us through for many more years.

The real satisfaction I have is the professional standing of the Pakistan Air Force. Whether it is the threat to our nuclear assets or to our vital installations or some madcap venture like the hysterical talk of surgical strikes, the PAF has neutralised all such postures with the nonchalance that the situation deserved. The foundations of this capability were laid in my time as the Chief. I was ably assisted by my compatriots both in the service as well as sister services and those in the government. We functioned as a team and made PAF strong. There was a strong feeling of camaraderie in which individuals did not matter. The sole objective was the triumph of PAF. Today, Allah be praised, this service is fully capable of hitting any would-be aggressor and giving a telling reply to those who harbour nefarious designs.

PAKISTAN AIR FORCE ZINDABAD!
PAKISTAN PAINDABAD

Appendix-A

ANALYSIS OF COMBAT LOSSES

Destruction of maximum enemy aircraft in the air and on the ground is the endeavour of any air force for establishing a desired degree of air control; this provides the means to achieve the ultimate end – lethal force application against surface forces or country-wide infrastructure. For an objective analysis, overall aircraft losses are best considered as an attrition rate or, loss per hundred sorties. Anything beyond 2% is generally considered unacceptable in any conflict. Comparison of attrition rates is a fair measure of the performance of two air forces (not to forget the army's air defence elements) in the quest for air superiority. A summary analysis of PAF and IAF losses in the two major wars is tabulated on the following pages:

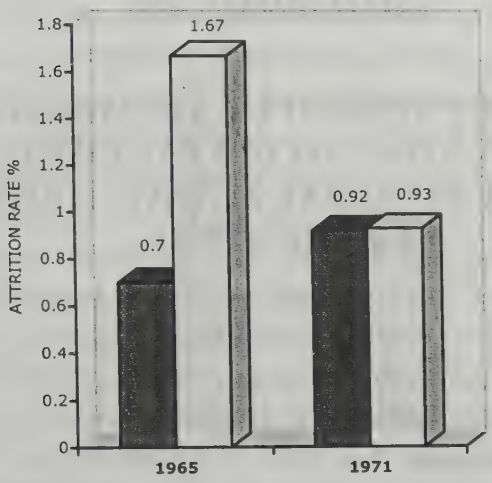
PAF	1965 WAR (1 SEP – 23 SEP)	IAF
COMBAT-RELATED AIRCRAFT LOSSES[a]		
7	Air Combat	17
3	Enemy AAA	9
2	Own AAA	-
1	Destroyed on Ground	39
3	Accidents – Combat Related	1
16	OVERALL ATTRITION	66
2,279[b]	TOTAL COMBAT SORTIES FLOWN	3,937[c]
0.7%	ATTRITION RATE	1.67%
AIRCREW CASUALTIES		
10	KIA	17[d]
3	POW	7
4	Ejected Own Territory	6
1	Survived Crash	-
-	Escaped	1

[a] Does not include Army, Navy or civilian aircraft losses.
[b] Source: Official PAF Records.
[c] Source: *Indian Official History of Indo-Pak War – 1965;* total sorties for Western Theatre only (Eastern Theatre negligible).
[d] Includes two aircrew who succumbed to injuries after landing.

PAF	1971 WAR (21 NOV – 17 DEC)	IAF
COMBAT-RELATED AIRCRAFT LOSSES		
10	Air Combat	19
7	Enemy AAA	36
1	Own AAA	-
7	Destroyed on Ground	3
2	Accidents – Combat Related	3
27	OVERALL ATTRITION	61
2,914[e]	TOTAL COMBAT SORTIES FLOWN	6,542[f]
0.92%	ATTRITION RATE	0.93%
AIRCREW CASUALTIES		
15	KIA	36
4	POW	13
4	Ejected Own Territory	8
-	Escaped	6

[e] Source: Official PAF Records.
[f] Source: *Indian Official History of Indo-Pak War – 1971.*

COMPARATIVE ATTRITION RATES
1965 & 1971 INDO-PAK WARS



Appendix-B

BANQUET SPEECH BY AIR MARSHAL JAMAL A KHAN TO BID FAREWELL TO AIR CHIEF MARSHAL M ANWAR SHAMIM 5 MARCH, 1985

Air Chief Marshal and Begum Shamim,
Ladies and Gentlemen!

We have gathered here tonight, to bid farewell to Air Chief Marshal and Begum Shamim. The Air Chief Marshal is leaving Pakistan Air Force at a time of unprecedented achievement and honour that our service enjoys today. All that he leaves behind is a matter of pride not only for him and all of us in the air force, but also for the nation as whole. The Air Chief Marshal's career in the PAF of over 34 years and his crowning success as its Commander would undoubtedly go down as a shining chapter in the air force history. That he is leaving behind him a fine, dynamic and hard-hitting force at the service of the nation should be a matter of great pride and satisfaction to him. His achievements, both as an outstanding officer of our air force, and a its head for seven years, are only too obvious to all those present here this evening but as a fitting tribute to his dynamic

leadership, I would like to bring on record some of the most important strides that the PAF has made under his command.

For this we have to go back a little in our history. You would recall that by the end of the 1971 war, the PAF had suffered substantial depletions in its operational infrastructure, including the loss of several thousand technical hands. Air Chief Marshal Shamim's predecessor's top priority had therefore been to meet those urgent and critical shortages and infrastructure deficiencies which had made the PAF seriously unbalanced. By the time he handed over the command to Air Chief Marshal Shamim, the PAF was almost back to its pre-71 strength. But much more remained to be done. Ladies and gentlemen, an air force facing multiple threats cannot mature and become a self-assured fighting force overnight. Air Chief Marshal Shamim inherited an air force, a large majority of which had yet to be operationally trained and fully tested in its fighting mettle. He, therefore, set himself the goal of attaining the highest possible level of operational preparedness for the PAF within the resource which the nation could make available. This indeed was no easy task. Taking into consideration our grave security situation, he drove himself and all of us hard and relentlessly, perhaps the most outstanding fact of this endeavour was the yearly jetstream series of exercises which he introduced. These gave our younger pilots not only the badly needed operational proficiency but also helped to enhance and test the PAF's fighting efficiency as a whole, in war- like scenarios. Many of you present here have worked hard in organizing and conducting these exercises, and are, in fact, veterans of several jetstreams. The end results of these operationally-oriented exercises has always been both rewarding and satisfying, not only for the Air Chief but also for all of us. You have lived through the prevailing threat environment of the last seven years, therefore I am certain that

you would appreciate that the special message of our operational preparedness was not lost on our enemies, it is equally certain that it is this preparedness which, to a large measure, acted to dissuade some adventures against our national security. Without dwelling more on this matter, I think we can be justifiably proud that the air force has more than once played a pivotal role in averting such dangers.

One of the most important lessons this air force had learned during its hours of trial was the need for decentralized command and control of our fighting elements, located hundreds of miles apart in different regions of Pakistan. This realization led to the establishment of Southern Air Command in 1981 at the CAS' initiative. Although many questioned the advisability of setting up any more commands, Air Chief Marshal Shamim pressed for and obtained the government's approval for establishing the Northern and Central Air Commands as well, which have proved to be of great benefit, both to us and the sister services in ensuring the most effective utilization of the nation's air power. I may also mention here that our air commands represent a sound infrastructure which will enable the air force to expand very rapidly, should an urgent need ever arise to do so.

Two other significant organizational improvements introduced by the CAS were the separation of supply and electronics branches to make their functioning more responsive to PAF's needs. This evolutionary process will continue to bring long-term benefits to our service in the future. During the tenure of command of Air Chief Marshal Shamim, our modernized air defence system was taken through its very laborious, challenging and complex stages of implementation. Today, we are at the threshold of its successful completion. The system has given the country an unprecedented air defence surveillance umbrella. It

will help us use our combat resources to much greater effect and the system will act as a strong deterrent to aggression.

You are all aware that the front line fighting element of the PAF were aging fast and out combat fleet was in serious and urgent need for modernization. The Air Chief Marshal relentlessly pursued his goal of inducting such weapon systems which would give the PAF a qualitative edge over its adversaries; the induction of the F-16 and its allied weapons has filled that need. The successful assimilation of the F-16 in the PAF is perhaps the most outstanding achievement which goes to the personal credit of the CAS. National resources, however, did not permit a large inventory of the F-16s. Since in an intensive or long-drawn-out war, numbers also count, the more economical, yet reliable A-5s were also inducted to meet the deficiencies resulting from grounding of our obsolete F-86s. Additionally, two new squadrons of Mirages were also fully established and equipped with modern weapons.

Another unprecedented achievement during the last 3 years was the establishment, for the first time in our history, of an anti-shipping capability, deep into the Indian Ocean. All these took time and strong, dedicated effort by the Air Chief. As a result, today the PAF has, perhaps for the first time in its history, achieved the right balance between its defensive and offensive capabilities.

Another prideful performance of the PAF, during the command of Air Chief Marshal Shamim, was in the field of flight safety, due to his personal involvement; our flight safety performance had shown a sustained trend of improvement in recent years. The CAS was not satisfied and took many organizational steps to focus everyone's energies and attention on a revitalized safety programme. It was during the last year that the PAF achieved an all-time low accident rate of 1.78 for

the first time in our history which the air chief had set as our goal. To an air force commander who happens to be intimately familiar with the high risk environment of a predominantly fighter force, such a safety performance must indeed bring great satisfaction. I congratulate the CAS for his personal interest in safety, which encouraged and motivated our maintenance and flying personnel to achieve this breakthrough.

Yet another major decision by the air chief was to move the Air Headquarters to Chaklala. With the limited facilities and resources available, implementation of this decision was no easy task. That some major elements of Air Headquarters have operated from chaklala effectively for the last two years speaks volumes of the farsightedness of our guest of honour.

Welfare of everyone in the PAF has been one of the top priorities of Air Chief Marshal Shamim. It can be said without reservation that all segments of the PAF have benefited from welfare projects and programmes launched and pursued in his time. In this regard, the Shaheen Foundation has come of age and is providing commendable relief to many. Besides, a large number of officers and men have been given post-retirement employment in the foundation.

My own association with the Air Chief Marshal dates back to 1955 for it was during that year that a dashing pilot with a distinctly Australian accent joined the rest of us in No. 11 squadron at Faisal. He was a very good fighter pilot, outgoing, and always cheerful. But during his first week in the squadron, I remember him to be definitely skeptical of the potential of Karachi's social life. That his adverse opinion of Karachi's potentialities soon improved provided ample testimony to us of this young bachelor's resourcefulness. We flew together in 11 squadron for some time and then parted for different units until we met again when the first 2 squadrons of the newly delivered

F-86s were established at Masroor. He then proceeded to Risalpur as an instructor and later returned to command his old squadron. At Sargodha we spent nearly 4 years together, including the period of 1965 war when the Air Chief Marshal was our OC Wing. At the end of the 65 war I took over 33 Wing from him when he left for Air HQ. Later during 1975-77 we were colleagues when he was ACAS (operations) and I did the ACAS (plans)' job. Throughout that period and after his assumption of command as the air chief, I have always found him to be a friendly, forthright and a frank senior officer who showed a full grasp of air warfare. As CAS, I never saw him impatient with contrary options, or to hesitate in giving a timely decision. He has been a strict disciplinarian but, in my experience, never heartless. He counseled his subordinates with sympathy and wisdom. All these qualities endeared him to all who worked with him. During his distinguished career, the air chief did many courses, all of them with distinction. He is a graduate of our staff college, the American International Defence Management Course and the National Defence College. Forever an adventure seeker, he also won his paratrooper's wing at the young age of 48; perhaps the only Air Chief Marshal to enter this type of training. He commanded many bases with distinction. Amongst them being Sakesar, Korangi Creek and Masroor. For 2 years in the late 60s he was the air adviser to the Kingdom of Jordan where his illustrious services were recognized by the ruler. Air Chief Marshal Shamim also held a number of coveted assignments in the operations and plans branches at Air Headquarters before he became head of the operations branch in 1975.

All in all, his was a career full of challenging assignments, where he always gave his personal best. It goes without saying that the air chief's numerous contributions in making the PAF

organizationally and operationally more effective would not have been possible without the full mobilization and marshalling of PAF's manpower. And here, as never before in our history, a high intensity of community improvement work was launched and sustained by the strong leadership provided by Begum Tahira Shamim. The important role played by the air force ladies in this spirited and purposeful endeavour was always guided energetically by Begum Shamim. Through her inspiring leadership Begum Shamim took on the PAFWA welfare projects as a crusade and introduced many vocations and activities which infused a new life in the organization. Our mujahida centres could not have done their laudable work without the perseverance of Begum Shamim, as the President of PAFWA. our ladies keenly pursued their noble objectives and have come to be admired widely in the country. Due to her charming and persuasive personality, Begum Shamim always received willing and enthusiastic support from the air force ladies. As a consequence, she leaves behind a very fine tradition of purposeful work in the family life of the air force. Her personal interest in the welfare of our low-paid employees and their families would also always leave fond memories of her in their hearts. It must be a source of great satisfaction for all of us to know that many of them have become useful members of the society, and have contributed materially in supplementing the incomes of their families. For this great and lasting contribution, I am sure that all of us will remember Begum Tahira Shamim with gratitude and admiration.

This brief recounting of the air chief's life and achievements, and those of Begum Shamim's would be incomplete without the mention of the CAS' unique role and endeavour in the infusion, in some of us of the laudable qualities of strong character, fortitude in the face of adversity, concentration in the face of

distraction, honesty in the face of temptation, and above all, eternal optimism; I refer, of course, to the game of golf. Had it not been for him, over a hundred happy and only occasionally frustrated addicts of this wonderful game would not have existed in our ranks today.

Ladies and gentlemen, I have come to the end of these few words of respect and admiration for the contributions made by our guests of honour. As we say our farewells, I assure you both---Air Chief Marshal and Begum Shamim---that we all will long remember you for your illustrious services to the air force and its family life. I will return to this rostrum briefly in a minute to offer you and Begum Shamim a few mementos to freshen your air force memories from time to time. But before I do that, ladies and gentlemen, I would like you to join me in a toast to the health and happiness of Air Chief Marshal and Begum Shamim.

Appendix-C

BANQUET SPEECH AIR CHIEF MARSHAL MUHAMMAD ANWAR SHAMIM CHIEF OF THE AIR STAFF ON THE EVE OF HIS RETIREMENT FROM PAKISTAN AIR FORCE 5TH MARCH, 1985

Air Marshal Jamal,

Ladies and Gentlemen! I consider this moment as a moment of great significance in my life. This occasion marks the culmination of my long association with the Pakistan Air Force -- an association which stretches over a period of 35 years, the last 6½ years of which were spent in the highest office of this great service. It is, no doubt very difficult to break one's ties with something one likes and loves and to leave an association, which can be safely termed as an occupation of life-time, is, indeed, all the more difficult. Moreover, when you have had the good fortune of leading such a remarkable organization like the Pakistan Air Force for the second longest term in its history, you are bound to be overwhelmed by the thoughts of parting ways.

Today, when I stand here to address you all for the last time in my capacity as the Chief of the Air Staff, my mind is crowded by the thoughts of 3½ decades. The whole thing seems to come back to me as if it was only yesterday. Indeed, memory does wonders for all of us. But I would not like to go over the events of my life once again because a lot has been said about that,

already. However, I would definitely like to place on record my thoughts and sentiments about this great organization which apart form being a way of life for all of us, is also one of the symbols of national pride. When I look back at my years, in the Pakistan Air Force my head bows down in profound gratitude before Allah almighty who has been extra-kind to me. God in his infinite mercy has blessed me with all that one can hope or aspire for. Starting from the very day when I decided to join the Pakistan Air Force to this day, I have never once had a moment of regret. Every day that dawned brought great tidings of a better tomorrow. I have enjoyed every minute of my life in this great service. It was a life full of learning and accomplishment, challenge and excitement, thrill and adventure, travel and enlightenment, and above all, hope and fulfilment. This occasion, therefore, is also a moment of thanksgiving.

Ladies and Gentlemen, it is only natural with us, human beings that we like to grow and develop and make a mark in life. Progress is so essential to life. Life in fact, is the following of a dream. One major aspect of this dream relates to our profession and the organisation in which we work. Every one wishes to reach a level in his organization where he can put his ideas into practice. A good number of us do aspire to reach the top to transform the organization in the light of their own thoughts and ideas. But only few see their dreams fulfilled and in an organization like the PAF, which is highly competitive and where risk is a way of life, only a handful reaches the decisive policy level and, of course, the ultimate place goes to the luckiest of them all. I definitely consider myself the luckiest among my peers. In fact, I have no words to thank God enough for guiding my path and granting me the privilege and honour of leading this remarkable service for such a long time. I am, indeed, very grateful to Air Marshal Jamal, the Chief of the Air Staff (designate) for saying all that he said about

me. He has been extremely generous in recounting the various events of my life. He has said so many good things about me--some a little too good, like the one about my youthful days in No 11 squadron. While he was saying this, I could see the glint in his eyes and the flush on his face. It is an accepted fact that the deeds of a person are rarely hidden form his roommate and here I would like to let you into a secret -- Jamal and I have been roommates and have walked along many sandy beaches together. But then that was more than three decades ago. Let us talk of here and now. I was saying that Air Marshal Jamal has been kind and generous to pay such rich tributes to me for what I have done for the Pakistan Air Force. I can only say that I have just done my duty to my country and my service. God has blessed me with the opportunity to put my ideas into practice and transform this fine body of men in the light of my own perception of things. Today, on the eve of my retirement form the service, i have the supreme satisfaction that I have tried to do my duty to the very best of my abilities. But as I say this I am acutely conscious of the fact that I could not have achieved much single-handedly. In all these years when I had the good fortune of leading this fine force, I was assisted most ably and persistently by a whole line of senior command and staff officers, the ever-vigilant Air Officers Commanding, the efficient Base Commanders, the O.C. Wings, the Squadron Commanders and the flight commanders. The willingness and the readiness with which they translated my thoughts into actions was a source of great strength for me. Without their genuine help and sagacious advice I would not have been able to do all that I did. Let us not forget the fact that mission accomplishment is a collective undertaking. It is, therefore, in the fitness of things that I must make a mention of individual contributions of all Officers, JCOs, airmen and civilian members of the air force staff. Like to also thank the Ministry of Defence and the Secretary Defence without

whose timely help many of the programmes would not have been completed in time. Gentlemen, I also take this opportunity to place on record my most grateful thanks to Begum Tahira Shamim, my wife, for her invaluable services to the Pakistan Air Force, in that, she did monumental work in improving the quality of family life in our service. It was, indeed, very heartening to see how the ladies in the entire length and breadth of the Pakistan Air Force rallied to her call. She was very enthusiastically assisted by the wives of base commanders and other senior officers on the bases. They as well as their husbands deserve my grateful thanks. She acted with remarkable vision and dedication not only in improving the lot of the families of the airmen and other low paid employees of the PAF but also in lending a distinct character and an identity to the entire community of women in the service. Her contributions will be remembered for long in the PAF and the institutions founded by her will continue to play their rightful role in the social and economic uplift of the families.

Gentlemen, I have great pleasure in asserting that the PAF today is in a very satisfactory shape. I attribute this happy state of affairs to the factors that I have already mentioned. But there is more to it than meets the eye. I would like to pay a tribute to my illustrious predecessors for handing down a very fine force to me. I am also grateful to the Chairman JCSC and the three services chiefs for their active cooperation and valuable support at the various governmental levels. The three sister services enjoy today, an unprecedented amount of cooperation, understanding and fraternity. I am certain that operating with their newly-enhanced integration they will prove to be an effective bulwark against any outside threat or aggression.

Gentlemen, on the eve of my retirement after a long and highly satisfying period of 35 years, I am about to hand over the command of this great service to Air Marshal Jamal A. Khan, who

is an officer and gentleman, in the highest traditions of the Pakistan Air Force. A very competent professional and an exacting commander as he is, he brings to this office rich and invaluable experience. The most significant aspect of this experience is that right from a cadet to Air Marshal he has worked in almost each and every capacity. He has not only commanded fighter squadrons, flying wings and operational bases but also had a considerable experience of staff jobs at almost all the levels of the service. Air Marshal Jamal possesses exceptional qualities of head and heart which are the products of a sound upbringing, good education and careful training. He has done a number of training courses such as flying course (USA), jet transition course (Germany), advance jet F 86 course (USA), T-33 aircraft course, pilot attack instructors course (UK), PAF staff college and joint services staff college (UK). A highly devoted officer and a fearless pilot, he has been decorated on a number of occasions. He was awarded sitara-i-jurat for showing valour in 1965 war. Later, he was awarded Hilal-i-Imtiaz, Sitara-i-Imtiaz and Sitara-i-Basalat for his meritorious service to the Pakistan Air Force. I am sure that under his able and dynamic leadership the PAF is destined to reach ever-greater heights in days to come.

With that, I come to the last and perhaps the most significant part of my speech i.e. the final "Khuda hafiz". Ladies and gentlemen, every beginning has an end. The wheel of my career in the Pakistan Air Force has come full circle. I will always cherish fond memories of this great service. I say goodbye and pray for the success and everlasting glory of this great service, the Pakistan Air Force. My very best wishes to Air Marshal Jamal A Khan, the Chief of the Air Staff (designate).

Appendix-D

ORDER OF THE DAY BY AIR CHIEF MARSHAL MUHAMMAD ANWAR SHAMIM ON RELINQUISHING COMMAND OF THE PAKISTAN AIR FORCE 5TH MARCH, 1985

On the eve of my retirement from the Pakistan Air Force, I greet all officer, JCOs, airmen and civilian staff of the PAF and extend to them my heartfelt gratitude and most sincere good wishes. It has been my honour to serve my country and its gallant air force for a long and highly satisfying period of 35 years. It was also my proud privilege to be the head of this fine force for the last over six and a half years. On handing over the command of the Pakistan Air Force, I bow my head in profound gratitude to Allah almighty for having showered his countless blessings on me, the most significant among these being the leadership of this great service. Today, at the end of my tenure as the Chief of the Air Staff, I am finally saying goodbye with the supreme satisfaction that I have done my duty to my country and my service to the best of my abilities. I also wish to pay a tribute to you all for your dedication to duty in its highest form and for your loyal assistance to me in fulfilling our mission of defending the aerial and ideological frontiers of our dear country. It is my firm belief that Pakistan is destined to become a great country and occupy a place of honour in the comity of nations. It is also my abiding faith that Pakistan Air Force will play its rightful,

significant role in the attainment of this cherished goal. Daunting courage and professional excellence have always been the hallmarks of the men in blues. Remember, such traditions of courage and standards of excellence were established at the cost of countless sacrifices made by our illustrious predecessors. I would, therefore, urge you to rededicate yourselves to the ideals of the service and the nation and work with added zeal not only to live upto these high traditions but also add new dimensions to them. I am passing on the leadership of this remarkable force to Air Marshal Jamal A. Khan who is one of the most competent and distinguished officers of the PAF. I hope you will extend to him the same loyalty and dedication which you invariably offered to me during my tenure as the Chief of the Air Staff. As I say goodbye to you, I express my fondest hopes and prayers for the greater strength and glory of the Pakistan Air Force. I also wish you and your families all the best for a happy future. May God be with you! Amen!

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"Sabres Nine"

Formation Aerobatics team in 1964 led by Wing Commander M Anwar Shamim

An air force facing multiple threats cannot mature and become a self-assured fighting force overnight. Air Chief Marshal Shamim inherited an air force, a large part of which had yet to be operationally trained and fully tested in its fighting mettle. He therefore set himself the goal of attaining the highest possible level of operational preparedness for the PAF within the resources which the nation could make available. This was no easy task. Taking into consideration our grave security situation, he drove himself and all of us hard and relentlessly.

Newly-appointed CAS, then Air Marshal Jamal A Khan's tribute to outgoing CAS

It is my firm belief that Pakistan is destined to become a great country and [illegible] a place of honour in the comity of nations. It is also my abiding faith that the Pakist[illegible]ce will play its rightful, significant role in the attainment of this cherished goal. D[illegible]ourage and professional excellence have always been the hallmarks of the men in

Excerpt from Air Chief Marshal M Anwar Shamim's f[illegible]peech

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